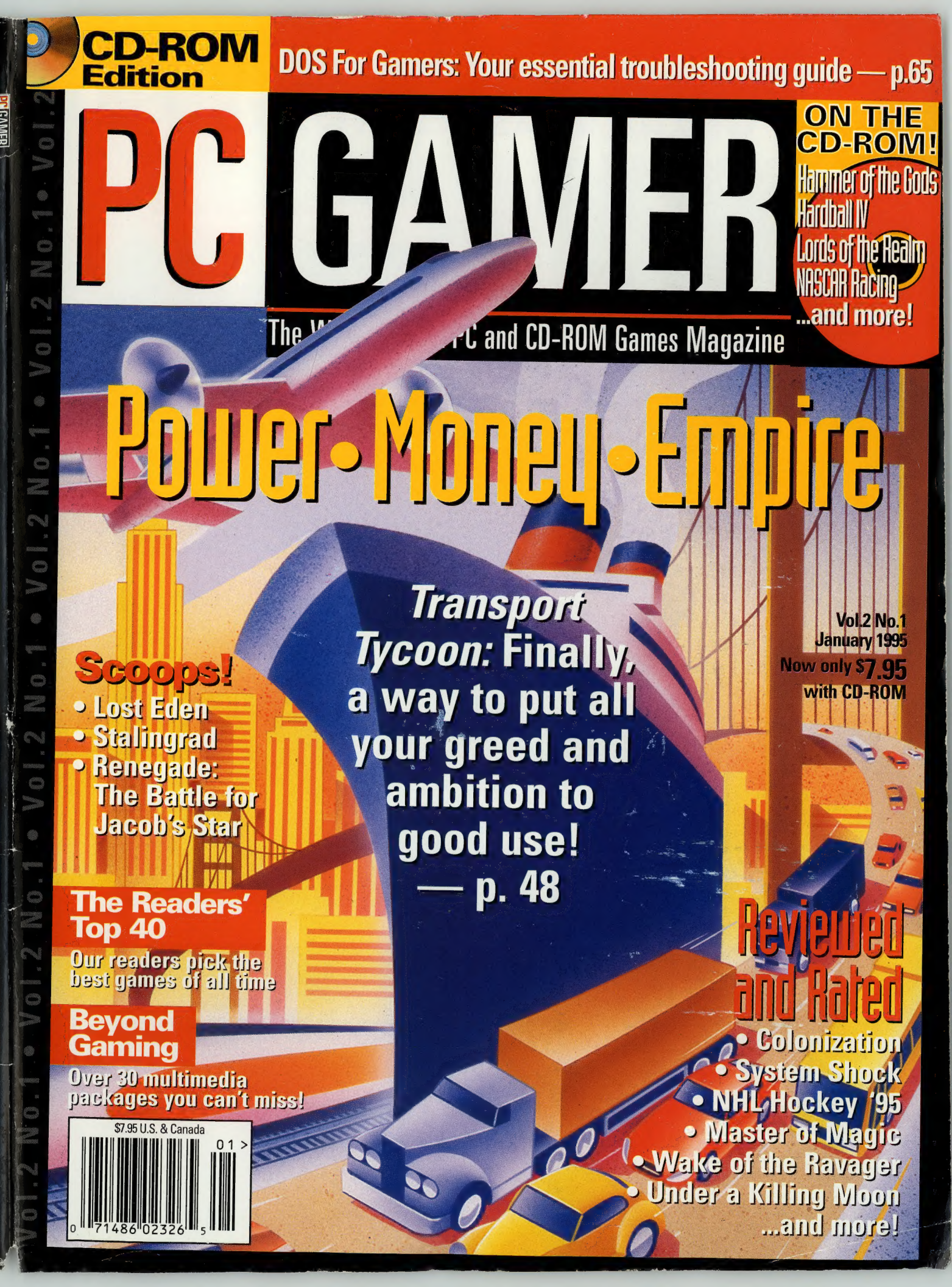

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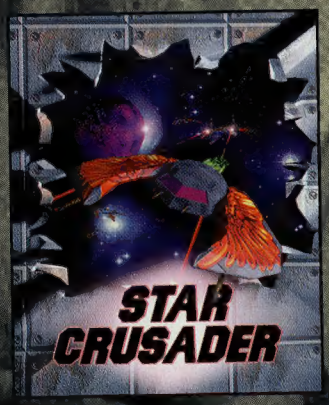


HELL: A CYBERPUNK THRILLER

"HELL could be likened to a photographic negative of *Myst*—still visually hypnotic, satisfyingly deep, and unavoidably addictive, but with a 180-degree detour into the darker regions of the mind."
—PC Gamer

"You've been playing games so far, kids, but this is the big time, the show, the main event. You're up against centuries worth of technology and evil. You can't win."
—Dennis Hopper, a.k.a. Mr. Beautiful

"Maybe if the creators of *Myst* had decided to mainline a couple of kilos of DMT... they could have produced HELL."
—CITY Magazine



STAR CRUSADER

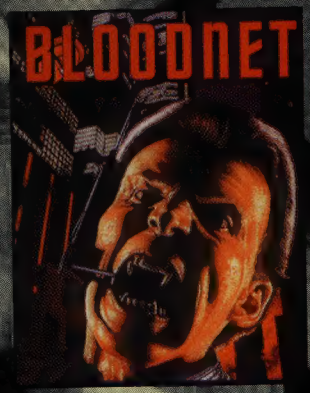
"STAR CRUSADER should be the next game on your playlist...☆☆☆☆."
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—Electronic Games

"...merges the best of both [*Wing Commander* and *X-Wing*] and then takes them a bit farther."—Strategy Plus

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—Computer Game Review

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Role-Playing Game of the Year, Runner-up
—Computer Gaming World

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—Computer & Video Games

"The blending of vampire mythology with cyberpunk gives the game world of BLOODNET a truly fresh quality, and brings together two genres which fit each other like fang and neck."
—Strategy Plus

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THE RELATIVES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

MASTER OF ORION

FOR THE MACINTOSH!

STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR
—Strategy Plus

STRATEGY GAME OF THE YEAR
—Game Bytes

GOLDEN TRIAD AWARD
—Computer Game Review

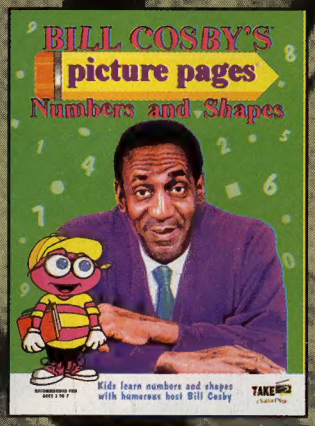


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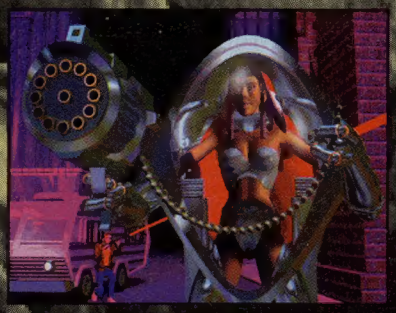


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TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE SOFTWARE

Product Information Number 146

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Transport Tycoon:

Planes, Trains, Automobiles — and Ships, too!

When we first heard talk of this new SVGA business sim from MicroProse — one that supposedly out-Tycoons *Railroad Tycoon* — we were a bit incredulous. But *Transport Tycoon* made believers of us with its sumptuous graphics, detailed economic models, and depth of gameplay. This is good stuff! Read T. Liam McDonald's feature, then load up our exclusive demo and decide for yourself.





Matt Steve

Disc-Interested Parties, and Goodbye Steve

We've begun to get feedback on the first *PC Gamer* CD-ROM, and for the most part it's been positive. Most of you realize the difficulty in creating a front-end program that allows you to simply click an Install button and play every game on the demo disc. We know it can be a real pain in the neck to have to install the game from the front end then reboot your computer to accommodate the demands of a particular game. But until game developers agree on some sort of standard regarding memory management (an unlikely proposition), the best we can do is find the most exciting games and provide you with as much information as possible on how to run them.

But that doesn't mean we're not going to change the CD-ROM. There's always room for improvement, and to that end we've made already made a couple of changes to The CD. The biggest is that now all the demos and software are listed on one screen, so you can spot the games that interest you at a glance. And we now dedicate an entire screen to each game, so we can list as much info as we can about what you'll need to do to install and run the games.

Besides the great reviews and features, there's one other thing that makes this issue special: It's the last one Co-Editor Steve Poole will be working on. Oh, you'll still see his name in the mag — he'll be doing reviews and feature stories — but as soon as we finish this issue he'll become Director of Online Services for GP Publications, with the ultimate goal of making it easier than ever for you guys to reach us online.

— Matt & Steve

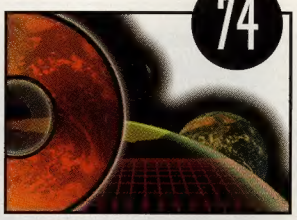
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DISC PAGES

INSTALLING • PLAYING • QUICK TIPS



If you liked the first Disc, you'll love this one: We've packed over 20 playable demos on The Disc this month! Welcome to *PCG: CD-ROM Edition*

Here we are, our second issue with The CD — and it's stuffed with even more game demos than last time! If you bought the *CD-ROM Edition*, these are the pages that'll help you get started with that shiny metal disc. We'll make it all clear, right here in the Disc Pages. Of course if you're a computer hot-shot, just toss The Disc in and get rolling.

If you didn't pick up the *CD-ROM Edition*, you're still in luck. Our 3.5" demo disk this month features *Transport Tycoon* by MicroProse, a highly addictive build-your-own transportation network simulation which also appears on The CD. The instructions for that demo can be found on p. *5* The rest of the Disc Pages won't apply to you, but they *will* give you a good idea of what you could be playing if you had a CD-ROM drive. And if you do have a CD-ROM drive and didn't pick up the *CD-ROM Edition*, look at all the fun you're missing!

One thing you *won't* be missing is *King's Quest VII* by Sierra. Despite what it says on the polybag, the demo wasn't finished in time to make this issue. We'll bring it to you just as soon as the folks at Sierra send it our way — and in the mean time, we tossed in a really cool demo of *Battle Bugs*. If you haven't seen this one yet, we thing you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Getting Started

If you don't have the CD-ROM Edition, place the 3.5" demo in your drive, switch to that drive (type A:, where A is the name of your 3.5" drive), and then type INSTALL and press Enter. You'll find more information about *Transport Tycoon* on p. 5

Now, on to the rest of the Disc Pages. We've tried to make it as easy to use The CD as possible, with a complete front end that tells you what you'll need to run each demo and a button that will automatically install the demo to your hard drive. To get The CD up and running, just pop the disc into your CD-ROM drive, switch to that drive (by typing D: where D is the name of your CD-ROM drive), and type PCG2. It's that simple! Now just browse through the menus, read the text files, and start enjoying the best interactive magazine and disc combination ever.

Whenever possible, we've tried to let you play the demos directly from The CD, without having to install files to your hard drive — but unfortunately, most of this month's demos require hard-drive installation. Just click on the picture of the game and, if possible, it'll launch right into the demo. Of course, whether this will work or not may depend on your system, and whether you have enough base memory and other special considerations. Some of you might not have enough base memory available while running your CD-ROM, for example. So you'll have to install the game to your hard drive, then reboot without loading your CD-ROM drivers and play from the hard-drive. You'll find all the info you need in the text files that accompany each game.

Requirements for The CD

We tried to make the disc compatible with as many systems as possible, so most of you shouldn't have any trouble running either the *PC Gamer* interface program or any of the individual game installations. For best results, you should have a double-spin CD-ROM drive capable of 300K/sec data transfer. The CD will run on a single-spin drive (it'll be *slow*, though), but it's probably in your best interest to install the games to your hard drive, where they'll have a better chance of showing you what they can do.

As for memory requirements, you'll find that they vary from demo to demo — just as they vary from game to game in their retail forms. So be sure to read the requirements for each demo carefully (they're on The CD, and in these pages).

If you do have trouble installing games from our interface, try running them from DOS. You'll need to log onto the CD-ROM drive and go to the directory where the game is located. You'll find a list of all the directories, and the command you'll need to type to get them running, in the chart on the next page.

Some of these demos are complete versions of the games, but with perhaps only one or two levels included. Others are samples of works in progress, and can be pretty glitchy. Running them may be a matter of having *exactly* the right hardware combination. So we'll warn you right off that not all these demos will run as easily as others. But these demos give you a rare opportunity to glimpse products before they've even hit the shelves — something only magazine editors and the game designers themselves usually get to do.

Installation Commands: Names and Locations

Here's a list of the directories on The CD where you'll find each game. These are all located within the \DISCII directory on The CD (so typing CD\DISCII\TYCOON on your CD-ROM drive will get you to the Transport Tycoon directory).

Game	Directory	Installation Command
Transport Tycoon	\TYCOON	INSTTYCO.BAT
Hammer of the Gods	\HAMMER	INSTHAMR.BAT
Battle Bugs	\BATLBUGS	INSTBUGS.BAT
Warcraft	\WARCRAFT	INSTALL.EXE
Dr. Radiaki	\RADIAKI	INSTALL.EXE
Battle Isle 2200	\BATLISLE	INSTALL.EXE
Lords of the Realm	\LOTR	INSTLORD.BAT
Hardball 4	\HARDBALL	INSTHARD.BAT
NASCAR Racing	\NASCAR	INSTNCAR.BAT
Dominus	\DOMINUS	INSTALL.EXE
Renegade	\RENEGADE	INSTALL.EXE
Delta V	\DELTAV	INSTALL.EXE
Prairie Dog Hunt II	\PDOG	INSTPDOG.BAT
One Must Fall 2097	\OMF2097	INSTALL.EXE
Holiday Lemmings	\LEMMINGS	INSTALL.EXE
Skunny Kart	\SKUNNY	INSTALL.EXE
Back to the Forest	\SKUNNY	INSTBACK.EXE
Lost in Space	\SKUNNY	INSTLOST.BAT
Save our Pizzas	\SKUNNY	INSTPIZA.BAT
Wild West	\SKUNNY	INSTWILD.BAT
Desert Raid	\SKUNNY	INSTRAID.BAT
Wacky Wheels	\WACKY	INSTALL.EXE
GEnie Network	\GENIE	INSTGENI.BAT
Cyberstrike	\GENIE\CYBERSTRIKE	INSTCYBR.BAT
SVGA Air Warrior	\GENIE\AIRWARRI	INSTAIRW.BAT
Rise of the Robots	\RISE	INSTROR.BAT
ImagiNation Network	\IMAGINE	FUN.BAT

Transport Tycoon

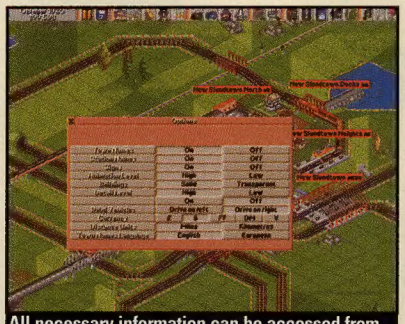
by MicroProse

Transport Tycoon is a fascinating business simulation that lets you buy, build, and control a vast transportation network. It's easy to get into and beautiful to look at, and a worthy successor to *Railroad Tycoon*.

This SVGA demo can be played in two ways — with or without competition. If you play with competition, you're pitted against other ambitious moguls to become the undisputed King of Transportation. Without competition, you can start with a blank screen and create your own model town and train set with a virtually unlimited number of pieces.



When set to the highest level, the detail of the little trains and towns is stunning.



All necessary information can be accessed from icons at the top. At this menu, you can change detail options as well as language and currency.

Our demo has no sound, features only rail transportation, and is based in England; the final game includes trucking, air, and ship transport, and lets you start in locales all over the world.

The demo requires a 386 with 4MB RAM, 5MB hard drive space, VGA graphics, DOS 5.0 or higher, and a mouse. Start by plopping down a main office, train depot, and station, then lay down some tracks and buy a train...choo-choo!

Warcraft

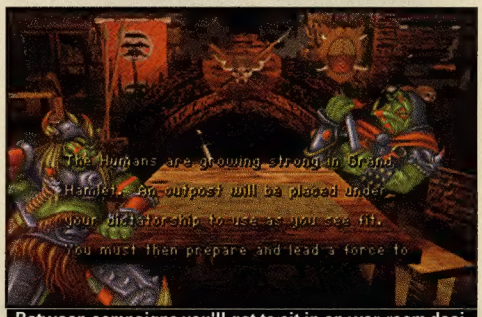
by Blizzard Entertainment

As in many of the best strategy games, your goals in *Warcraft* are to take over territory, develop your forces and, ultimately, to conquering your opponent. The graphics, animation, and sound effects are terrific. You can play as either race, so don't hesitate to try out the Orcs — we give them high marks on their guttural language.

The game requires a 386/20 with 4MB RAM, VGA graphics, DOS 3.2 or higher, 2MB hard-drive space, and a Microsoft-compatible mouse. Even in this demo state, most of the major sound cards are supported.



Weather you're a human or an orc, you'll be slugging it out toe-to-toe for control of you turf.



Between campaigns you'll get to sit in on war-room decisions, and you'll receive orders for your next mission.

Almost all game control is mouse-based and pretty self-explanatory, but here are a few additional "hot keys" to help you out:

HOT KEYS

F2 - F4 = Recall saved map position
F5 = Mini Map (toggles between ON/OFF)
F6 = Unit Screen (Lists all units in play and units destroyed)
F7 = Economy Screen (Lists total resources harvested)
F8 = Score (This gives an indication of your success, lists your rank, and gives your current mission objectives)
F10 = Options Menu
F11 = Quick Load Game
F12 = Quick Save Game
Esc = Cancel any command just issued in any menu (also, right click on mouse)

Battle Bugs by Sierra

You won't look at the insect world in the same way after checking out this demo of *Battle Bugs*, the unique combat game of tactical insect warfare. Your forces will be comprised of ants, lightning bugs, bees, mosquitoes, pill bugs, and other creepy-crawlies with varying abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Your opponents are comprised of spiders, praying mantises, beetles and other bad bugs.

The premise is simple; you represent the forces of US, and the object of the game is to defeat your opponent, the forces of THEM. This can be done either by destroying all enemy forces, or by out-maneuvering them and successfully holding strategic points (food) on the battle field.

The game requires a 386, 4MB RAM, 4.6MB hard drive space, VGA graphics, and a mouse. All movement and fighting commands are controlled by clicking on each bug. There's a short README.TXT file to get you started, but the game itself includes a more complete overview of what each move icon can do.



Here's one of your objectives, the kitchen counter — a very important battle field in the insect world.

Battle Isle 2200 by Accolade

Fans of the original *Battle Isle* will love this new release, *Battle Isle 2200*. This one puts a futuristic spin on the original, and offers plenty of new weapons and strategies to explore.



This top-down screen is where you'll move your units and provides an overview of the different weaponry headed your way.

And to keep you entertained as you learn all the new ins and outs, there are plenty of super looking battle sequences to help round out the carnage.

For those not familiar with *Battle Isle*, you're in charge of an army with lots of new high-tech units on land, air, and sea. The computer controls four equally mighty armies, and you're all fighting for dominion over the same island.

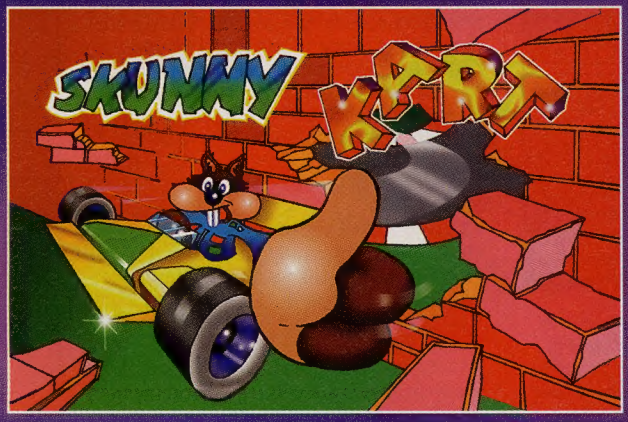
A couple of armies will pose an immediate threat, but don't think you've got to go after all four of them at once. If you don't attack them, they might not attack you — at least not right away. So at first, concentrate on the threats at hand. And if you're lucky, the remaining armies might even weaken themselves by fighting amongst each other.



Though they pack quite a punch, even the most modern of soldiers will have trouble dealing with this new technology.

The game requires a 386, VGA graphics, 4MB RAM, 2.3MB free EMS, 585k free conventional memory, 3.8MB hard-drive space and a mouse. Most major sound cards are also supported.

The controls are all point-and-click, but if you have any problems there are three files you can take a look at; HELP.TXT, TIPS.TXT, and MANUAL.TXT.



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Product Information Number 103

The Fortress of Dr. Radiaki

by Merit

Here's some bat-swinging pleasure, and we're *not* talking baseball. *Dr. Radiaki* tosses you into a maze of danger in a first person, kill-or-be-killed adventure. Sure, there are some similarities to *Doom*: But what *Doom* has in pure demonic terror, *Dr. Radiaki* has in humor.

As the headlines read, you're embarking on a secret invasion of Dr. Radiaki's fortress. He's holding the Earth hostage and demanding way too much ransom, so it's up to you to stop him and save the world a few bucks. The game starts you off in a maze with only a baseball bat as a weapon, then sends you off to work on your career average.

We hope you have a sound card so you can enjoy one of the funnier aspects of the game — your enemies' comments as you bash them!

Now, we've got to warn you: This game is *quite* demanding, and requires 8MB RAM (!), a 386/33 (though a 486/33 is the *least* we'd recommended), DOS 5.0, 1MB hard-drive space, and VGA graphics. A mouse is optional (but recommended), and most major sound cards are supported.

Before you get out there and into some serious trouble, you'll need to get these controls down pat. *Then* you can wreak some havoc!



It's Toasterhead! He's tough, but always one of our favorites to bash.

GENERAL CONTROLS

Keys 1-7	Toggles through weapon inventory
Spacebar	Reloads your weapon
M	Activates automap
Ctrl	Activates doors, levels, and access tubes.
ESC	Sends you back to main menu

KEYBOARD CONTROLS

Arrow Keys	Directs movement
Shift	Fires Weapon

MOUSE CONTROLS

Right Click	Fires Weapon
Left Click	Move (hold down left button, and move mouse)

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Product Information Number 156

Hammer of the Gods

by New World Computing

In *Hammer of the Gods*, you're a Viking hero with plenty of territory to conquer as you compete with up to four opponents for the favor of the gods. To become the gods' favorite Norse boy, you'll need to complete quests in addition to your normal Viking pillaging and plundering activities.

Your units will discover new wealth everywhere as they explore the unknown. You'll also come across one of our new favorite Norse gods: Ratatosk, the Squirrel Tale-Bearer. Just hearing the narrator speak his name is worth the price admission.

The minimum requirements for this one are a 386, 4MB RAM, VGA, DOS 5.0, and a mouse. The first time you load the game, very helpful tutorial notes will guide you along the "what do I do first" path. We recommend you play this game from the CD; it *can* be installed and played from the hard drive, but this will require a whopping 61MB of hard-drive space!

Your choices are limited in this demo as far as choosing a race or creating a map. Also, there are no computer opponents available, and some graphics aren't quite complete (although you'll probably never notice). Still, we're sure you'll be as impressed as we were by this surprisingly enjoyable demo.



A veritable Valhalla of surprises await as you uncover the dark brown map squares of Europe.

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5TH FLEET™

Zhirinovsky has seized the reins of power in the Kremlin, and he's got his eye on warm-water ports and rich oil deposits in the Persian Gulf and Indian Oceans. While the Kirov cruises toward Bahrain, and Typhoons prowl the Gulf, where is the United States?

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5th FLEET can be found in computer game stores near you. For order information or for the name of a retailer near you, call *1-800-999-3222. Ask for Dept. PC 1*

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Product Information Number 86

One Must Fall

by Epic MegaGames

Up for a little robot-to-robot combat? Then check out Epic MegaGames' *One Must Fall*, a robot street-fighting game. This is a one- or two-player game that throws you into a single elimination tournament. Don't worry about the plot; just pick a player, robot armor, and go at it.

The game requires a 386 or better, VGA graphics, 4MB RAM with 550k free conventional memory, and 2MB XMS. There's complete joystick support, and two joysticks can be used with the proper adaptor. Each robot has a number of standard and special moves, and though there's a list of what each bot's special move is, you're "challenged" to find the key combinations on how to activate them. The keyboard controls can be customized, but here are the defaults:

KEYBOARD CONTROLS

Right Side of Keyboard	
Punch	Enter
Kick	Right-Shift
Movement, Jumping & Ducking	Arrow keys
Left Side of Keyboard	
Punch	TAB
Kick	Ctrl
Jumping	Q,W,E
Left & Right Movement	A,D
Ducking	Z,X,C

Dominus

by U.S. Gold

Monsters and magic are the norm in the land of *Dominus*. It's a mythical/ medieval setting, with you in the role of King. The game lets you direct monstrous hordes and use magic potions during combat from an overhead view — or you can grab a weapon and jump into the fray.



You start off with a nice-sized kingdom. You'll probably want to deploy some troops around the outskirts, just to be on the safe side.

Upon loading the game, you're immediately informed that your castle is about to be attacked. If you don't act quickly you'll go down fast, so click on one of the generals standing in front of you and deploy some monsters to meet the attack. And don't forget to capture some of your enemies — you can interrogate them in your dungeon, and even mix them with existing creatures to create entirely new monsters!

The game requires a 386 or better, VGA, 4MB RAM with 575k free conventional memory, DOS 5.0 or higher, and a mouse. Also, this demo *requires* a whopping 26MB of hard-drive space, so you may want to check your available space before installing.

Since there's so much to this game, we strongly suggest reading the README.TXT before you start playing, or you might feel a little lost. There's also a ten-minute limit on the demo, so it's best to be prepared before jumping in.

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Product Information Number 133

Lords of the Realm

by Impressions

In *Lords of the Realm*, you start out as the lord of a single county with the goal of conquering — or at least not being conquered by — the other lords of Great Britain. It's a multiplayer game, and can handle up to six players, with the computer filling in where needed. And there's more to it all than just fighting: to be successful, you must tend to your fields as well as your armies.

The demo gives you a limited number of turns, and only lets you control up to two counties. Castles cannot be designed or built, some battle scenes have been removed, and games cannot be saved. Still, the quality of this game will make a believer of you.

Lords requires at least a 386, 640K RAM (it'll use XMS if available), 6.5MB hard-drive space, VGA, and a mouse. The only sound cards supported at this time are Sound Blaster and 100% compatibles, and they must be set for Address 220 and IRQ 7. A README.TXT file is included, and will really help get you started.


As you see here there are plenty of counties to conquer — 32 to be exact. But the demo won't let you wander very far from home.

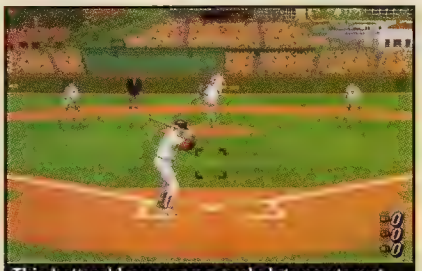
Hard Ball 4 by Accolade

If you didn't get your fill of baseball this past summer (that's a joke, son), then check out this hot-looking baseball sim from Accolade. The digitized movements of the players, taken from actual footage, are mighty smooth and impressive. And making the plays, from hitting and pitching to fielding, is very satisfying stuff.

You can play as any one of several teams. Accolade hasn't put the final touches on the graphics, so the players' faces don't have any color. But they still look great.

Installing the game is a bit more involved than our other demos. After launching the INSTALL icon from The CD, you'll need to go to your hard drive and switch over to the H4DEMO directory. Here, you'll need to type H4DEM to extract some files, then type INSTALL.

The necessary requirements are a 386 or better, 4MB RAM (with at least 3.3MB RAM available), VGA, and 7MB hard-drive space. There's also a README.BAT file and a HELP.BAT file if you need a bit more assistance.



This batters' box camera angle lets you target your pitches, and really helps to give the batter a good read on the ball.

1994 Holiday Lemmings by Psygnosis

This is a demonstration of the new 1994 holiday version of *Lemmings,* a uniquely mind-boggling game of rodent salvation. It's a four-level mini-game supporting both EGA and VGA, and can be played with a mouse, joystick, or keyboard.

Basically, the aim is to get the lemmings out of the level by guiding them safely to the exit (the thing that looks like a holiday pudding). Lemmings aren't very smart, so they'll need lots of help to get them through.

The game requires only 512k conventional memory, EGA or VGA graphics and little else. There's also a HELP.BAT file we recommend checking out to help fill you in on the different commands you can give your lemmings.

The game controls are as follows:

KEYBOARD CONTROLS

Q	Up
A	Down
O	Left
P	Right
Space	Select

MOUSE CONTROLS

Left Mouse Button	Select
Right Mouse Button	Auxiliary

JOYSTICK CONTROLS

Fire Button 1	Select
Fire Button 2	Auxiliary



Here are the little holiday-happy rodents, all decked out in their favorite Santa garb.

Delta V by Bethesda

In the distant future (2306 A.D., to be exact), data is money. Corporations have developed an elaborate sense-net matrix, and they've employed cybernetically enhanced pilots to fly through the matrix and find any flaws in it's structure and design. As one of these pilots, you'll have to navigate and infiltrate the matrix with one primary goal — to survive.

You're basically flying your craft through a canal, with plenty of obstacles and enemies to deal with. If this is your first time playing *Delta V,* we strongly suggest that you start at the lowest level of difficulty. The demo consists of only three selected levels from the finished game, and none of the the story line, mission briefings, or tactical briefings are included.

The game requires 600k of free conventional memory, a 386 or better, VGA, a mouse, and a joystick. Best of all, this one *does* play from the CD-ROM. There's a README file for most control functions, and a HELP file if you need further assistance.

Here are a few general hints and tips to get you going:

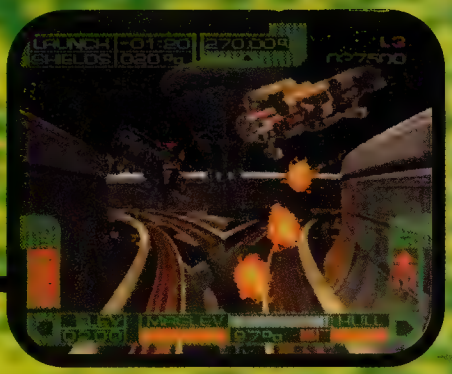
- Speed is governed by altitude. The higher your altitude, the slower your velocity. In order to go fast, hug the bottom of the trench. But be careful: this will cause you to build heat, and may eventually damage your trace (that's what your ship is called).
- It is usually safer to remain beneath the trench lip. The enemy will have a much harder time tracking you there.
- Energy and armor are valuable to your success. Keep an eye on the green and blue bars on your HUD at all times. Be on the look out for Power Rings, Mind Fields, Power Spins, Bonus Trenches, and more.


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Renegade: Battle for Jacob's Star

by SSI

This space-combat sim gives you just a nibble of the actual game — but it's a very *tasty* bite. It contains one of the more than 70 missions that'll be included in the final product, and really shows off the excellent graphics and smooth flight models that left us wanting to see more.

The mission in the demo is a simple fighter sweep. You're assigned a ship and wingman, though in the final version you can select from among several of each. When you've made all of your selections, you'll find yourself in the cockpit of your Interceptor. Enemy fighters will appear very soon, and then the fun begins.

The requirements are a 486/33, 600k of free conventional memory and 2048k free extended memory, 5MB hard-drive space, DOS 5.0, SVGA, a mouse, and a joystick. In the file README.TXT are the keyboard commands for wingman control, cockpit views, and so on. Here are some of the more important ones:

COCKPIT CONTROLS:

F1, F2, F3, F4	Pilot Views
+	Increase Throttle
—	Decrease Throttle
Backspace	Set Throttle to Zero
/	Throttle Match of Current Target
W	Select Weapon Systems
Joy Button 1	Fire Weapons
T	Targeting Ships
D	Internal Damage Display
Shift-C	Orders Wingman to Cover You
Shift-A	Orders Wingman to Attack Your Target
Shift-W	Orders Wingman to Attack at Will

Rise of the Robots

by Time-Warner Interactive

It's the far future, and a cyber-disease called the EGO virus has infected the Supervisor, a high-tech sentry robot. The virus stimulates a pleasure response whenever the Supervisor commits an act of violence, so you know what it's been doing as much as possible. And now it has infected more robots. A cyborg - part man, part machine - has been constructed for the sole purpose of stopping the Supervisor and the others. That cyborg is you.

This is a beautiful game, but one that's full of intense action as well. The demo is but a small snippet of the game to come, though it should give you an idea of the fantastic images *Rise of the Robots* offers. The basic requirements call for a 486 with an SVGA card and 4MB of memory, but a fast SVGA card and an extra 4MB RAM will really supercharge the action. And since this demo is in two-player mode only, you'll probably want to use two joysticks if possible, or a combo of keyboard/joystick control.

To begin play, type ROR at the RISE prompt on the hard drive you selected during installation. You can also type SETUP at the RISE prompt to select a sound card, and define keys for keyboard control of combat.

The special moves available in this demo are:

Cyborg:	Turbo Head Butt and Shoulder Barge
Military Droid:	Cyber Slash and Catapult Spin

Prairie Dog Hunt II

by Diversions Software

It's prairie dog season. You're armed with a pellet gun, a .44 magnum, a rifle, and the can't-miss SPAS 12 double barrel shotgun. Those little doggies don't stand a chance.

This is a Windows game, and in your little woodsy Windows world you'll scan left and right trying to draw a bead on those fast-moving critters. Some stand in the open, others just barely peak out, so aim carefully. Your accuracy will count in your final score.

Other than Windows, a VGA card, and a mouse, there's little else this game requires.

Wacky Wheels

by Apogee

Here's *Wacky Wheels*, another wacky animal racing title in the spirit of *Skunny Kart*, which also appears on The CD. This is your chance to do one of the things this CD-ROM is intended to do — compare games before you buy 'em. You'll see a lot of similarities between these two race games, but give them both a try and see which one you enjoy most.

To begin with, you'll need at least a 386/25 with 2MB RAM and 8MB of free hard drive space, plus a VGA graphics card. Joystick and Gamepad are optional.

These controls can be set up for one or two players:

JOYSTICK CONTROLS

Turn Left	Left
Turn Right	Right
Accelerate	Fire Button 1
Fire Hog	Fire Button 2
Brake	Fire Button 3
Hand Brake Turn	Fire Button 4

Keyboard Controls (default)

Turn Left	Left Arrow
Turn Right	Right Arrow
Accelerate	Alt
Fire Hog	Ctrl
Brake	Down Arrow
Hand Brake Turn	Spacebar

(These keyboard controls can be customized)

Keyboard Controls for Player 2 (default)

Turn Left	D
Turn Right	F
Accelerate	A
Fire Hog	S
Brake	G
Hand Brake Turn	H

(Player 2's control keys can be customized, but must always be played on the keyboard)

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Scope out the terrain.
Slew your turret.
Lock on target.
And brace yourself for a fire storm!

You're in the heart of an advanced fighting machine. Peering through the thick smoke billowing off your last victim, you feel you're being watched. Switching to thermal shows something hot behind the trees ahead. Advanced optics zoom in and reveal a Soviet T-80 tank turning its turret toward you. Now is not the time to hesitate. Lock and load. FIRE!

Forge ahead on the digital battlefield of the future in this modern tank simulation from NovaLogic™ (the creators of Comanche™, WolfPack™ and Ultrabots™).

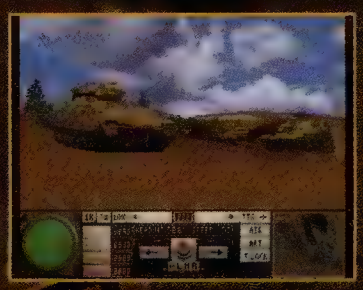
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NOVA LOGIC

Product Information Number 125

NASCAR Racing

by Papyrus

For some realistic NASCAR oval-track racing, we highly recommend you take a look at *NASCAR Racing*. Unlike the other two racing games on this disk, *Skunny Kart* and *Wacky Wheels*, this one takes its racing a bit more seriously. As in the popular *IndyCar Racing*, the graphics and sound give you the feeling of watching a race on TV — but with the option to experience the action for yourself.

The *NASCAR Racing* demo will allow you to drive a few laps around the Talladega Superspeedway, a 2.66 mile oval dubbed "the fastest track in the world." You can only run on the practice laps, since there aren't any opponents on the demo. But heck, they'd just get in your way anyhow.

To play in VGA mode, you'll need *at least* a high-end 386 to get smooth play, as well as 3MB of free RAM and 1.4MB hard drive space. To get the high resolution graphics, you'll need 8MB of RAM and a 486/66 DX2, plus a VESA-compatible SVGA card.

The controls are pretty simple — just arrow keys if your running off the keyboard. You can customize these keys for any keyboard/joystick combinations. There's also a README.TXT file, in case you need some help.

Skunny & Company

by Copysoft

A sixpack of *Skunny* games await you, all featuring this wild-eyed squirrel out to throw a whupping on his enemies. And boy, it seems Skunny has plenty of enemies, from denizens of his own forest all the way to outer-space men.

All of the games in this *Skunny* collection consist of side-scrolling shoot & jump action with the exception of *Skunny Kart*, a multi-player race car game much like *Wacky Wheels* (you'll find it on The CD, too). The other *Skunny* titles are *Save Our Pizzas, Back to the Forest, Lost in Space, Skunny in the Old West* and *Desert Raid*.

Each game requires a VGA card and at least DOS 3.0, but other requirements may vary and range from 4MB RAM and 5MB hard disk space for *Skunny Kart* to only 640K RAM and 2MB hard disk space for *Lost in Space*. A HELPME file is available for each game.

GEnie for Windows

— with *Cyberstrike* and *SVGA Air Warrior*

by GEnie

Not to ignore online gamesters, here's the front end for the on-line network *GEnie*. *GEnie* offers e-mail, BBS access, conferencing, and, as our readers will be glad to note, multiplayer gaming. We've also included the front ends you'll need to run *Cyberstrike* and *SVGA Air Warrior*, two of the most popular games on *GEnie*.

SVGA Air Warrior will have you flying all types of warplanes through several eras of air combat, from biplanes to modern aircraft. The controls are pretty simple, and the action is as challenging as your opponents. *Cyberstrike* takes you into a futuristic battle scenario where you pilot a big, mean battle mech-type craft. You'll roam around fighting other on-line pilots in tough head-to-head action. Energy runs everything in this game, including shields, guns, and engines, so stay powered up.

The *GEnie* front end will require Windows, 4MB hard drive space and VGA graphics. *Cyberstrike* will require an additional 2.5MB hard, drive space and *SVGA Air Warrior* will require a whopping 38MB hard drive space. Each game comes with a README.TXT or MANUAL.DOC file to learn those little control variables.

For basic service — including e-mail, multiplayer games, and chatting — the current rates are $8.95/month for your first 4 hours of non-prime time use, and $3.00 per hour over that. There's an additional surcharge of $9.50 per hour for prime time usage. All rates are for the continental U.S. You can call 1-800-638-9636 for more information.

The ImagiNation Network

If the usual on-line service leaves you with techno-tremors, perhaps you should check out *The ImagiNation Network*. Where most services have screen after screen of indecipherable jargon, or at best glitzy colors with the same jargon, *ImagiNation* offers an entirely different interface - a town motif where the various utilities and services are couched in friendly, familiar surroundings. The friendliness even extends to your own on-line persona, a graphic representation you can customize to mirror you.

E-mail, conferences, entertainment areas, and the promise of future on-ramps to the Info Autobahn make *ImagiNation* available alternative to the millions who don't really want to know the ins and outs of Z-Modem and Wildcat, or learn the lexicon of the Internet...at least not yet. Install *ImagiNation* and get all the info on how to go "on-line."

Running the install program — FUN.BAT — loads *ImagiNation* onto your hard drive, and will require about 15MB of disk space. Then type INN from the DOS prompt to go into the sign-up screens. At the time of this writing rates for *ImagiNation* were:

Basic Plan
$9.95/month 5 hours/month

Gold Plan
$49.94/month 15 hours/month

Platinum
$99.95/month 50 hours/month

You can call ImagiNation Network at 1-800-IMAGIN1 to get the latest rates and other info about getting started.

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CD-ROM CINEMATIC MULTIMEDIA

Interplay

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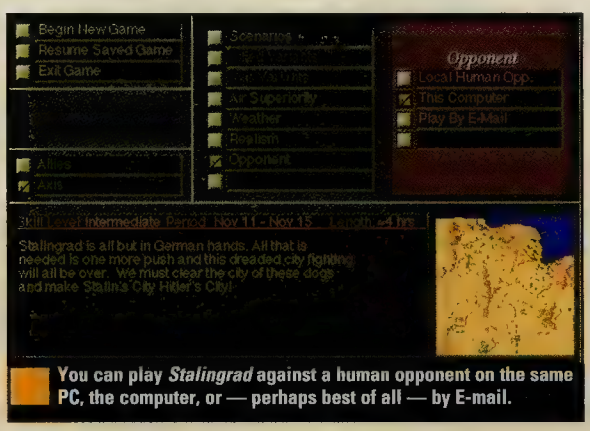
EXCLUSIVE! BEHIND-THE-SCENE OF THE HOTTEST GAMES

Stalingrad

Truly, The Mother of All Battles

Avalon Hill is giving you the chance to refight the bloodiest — and perhaps most important — battle of all time.

by Steve Poole



You can play *Stalingrad* against a human opponent on the same PC, the computer, or — perhaps best of all — by E-mail.

Stalingrad. For wargamers and military historians, the name alone is enough to conjure images of death and destruction — and raise the inevitable "what if?" questions that are the linchpin of both hobbies.

The interest in Stalingrad is understandable: Never before or since has there been a battle like it. It was the bloodiest fight of all time, leaving behind over three million dead. It was the climax of an offensive that saw the sweeping, fast-paced tank assaults of blitzkrieg warfare degenerate into savage street fighting, in which advances were measured in yards rather than miles. And while the ultimate *outcome* of the war did not hinge on entirely on the events at Stalingrad, there's no question that the decisions made there had a direct bearing on the course the war took for the next two and a half years.

If von Paulus had managed to take the city in the first assault, the impact on the morale of the Russians would have been incalculable — and the German juggernaut would likely have turned northward for a second assault on Moscow in as many years. A quick German surrender, on the other hand, would have allowed Russian forces tied up in the siege at Stalingrad to begin their offensive much earlier, with the possibility of even more of Europe being encompassed by what Churchill dubbed an "Iron Curtain."

Now, thanks to Avalon Hill and Atomic Games, you'll get a chance to relive the drama and fury of this climactic struggle — and savor one of the finest interfaces to ever grace a wargame. For *Stalingrad*, veteran development team Atomic Games has fine-tuned the engine it used in *Operation*



In the game's larger scenarios, there are an amazing number of variants you can toggle in order to reach the appropriate level of difficulty.

FYI — FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Game: Stalingrad
Developer: Atomic Games
Publishers: Avalon Hill, 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD, 21214 (410) 254-9200
Projected Price: TBA
Percent Complete: 80%

In a nutshell:

Stalingrad is the newest entry in the World at War series, which got off to a very auspicious debut with *Operation Crusader*. Playing as either Russian or German commander, you hold the fate of the world in your hands.

What's so special?

There have been many wargames based upon Eastern Front campaigns, but none which so meticulously re-create the battle for Stalingrad. Seven scenarios ranging in gameplay from four to fifty hours.

Why should I care?

Atomic Games is designing *Stalingrad* — and if you're a wargame fan, you probably already know about Atomic Games' outstanding track record.

And when's it coming out?

It should be on shelves just in time for Christmas.

Crusader (PCG rating: 94%) to incorporate the various elements that were at play during the battle for Stalingrad. The result? A game that perfectly captures the wildly varying types of combat that comprised the campaign, and which achieves the incredible goal of being both inviting to newcomers and satisfying to longtime players.

Attention to historical accuracy is the hallmark of Atomic Games, and *Stalingrad* is no exception. "We've implemented a number of changes to the World at War engine since *Operation Crusader*," says Atomic Games President Keith Zabalaoui. "We've added a couple of types air missions, air recon and air resupply, along with the different types of aircraft needed to carry those out." Air supply was a crucial aspect during the Russian encirclement of the German Sixth Army, and while Atomic could have glossed over it by simply factoring in historical figures, they went the extra mile necessary to give you control over it — *if* you choose. As with all Atomic games, you can always let your Staff (i.e., the computer) handle resupply.



One of the most useful features in Stalingrad is the ability to access the Order of Battle for your forces — and if Atomic has their way, you'll be able to reattach units from this screen, too!



Strategic maps provide insight into troop movements and battle plans.

Another change is also related to the question of supply —but this is one change that Zabalaoui and company anticipated. "For each game, we've ended up rewriting the supply rules, just to focus on the particular supply problems or idiosyncrasies of that battle. With *Crusader*, we introduced supply depots; here, the Germans are often tracing supply from airfields, and you can actually move supply around from airfield to airfield."

There are seven scenarios in the game set between September of



Operation Uranus is based on the Russian operation to smash the Romanian 3rd and 4th armies and isolate the German 6th Army, led by General von Paulus. Expect to invest between 40 and 50 hours with this one.



The scenario that begins 11 November 1942 is one of the shortest, but it's also one of the most challenging — if you play as the Germans, that is.

Say It Ain't So, Adolf

All the formations lost at Stalingrad were reformed during spring 1943 — Hitler had an abhorrence of striking any formation off the Order of Battle. Below is a list of these formations with the theatres in which they subsequently fought after reconstitution.

HQ Sixth Army	Eastern Front
HQ IV Panzer Corps	Eastern Front
HQ VIII Corps	Eastern Front
HQ XIV Panzer Corps	Sicily, Italy
HQ LI Corps	LI Mountain Corps, Italy
3 Panzer Grenadier Div.	Italy, Western Front
14 Panzer Division	Eastern Front
16 Panzer Division	Italy, Eastern Front
24 Panzer Division	Italy, Eastern Front
29 Panzer Grenadier Div.	Sicily, Italy
44 Infantry Division	Italy, Eastern Front
60 Panzer Grenadier Div.	Eastern Front
71 Infantry Division	Slovenia, Italy, Eastern Front
76 Infantry Division	Italy, Eastern Front
79 Infantry Division	Eastern Front, but destroyed again in Sept. 1944, reconstituted once more and then to Western Front
94 Infantry Division	Italy
100 Jaeger Division	Albania, Eastern Front
113 Infantry Division	Eastern Front
295 Infantry Division	Norway
297 Infantry Division	Albania, Yugoslavia, Eastern Front
305 Infantry Division	Italy
371 Infantry Division	Italy, Yugoslavia
376 Infantry Division	Eastern Front
384 Infantry Division	Eastern Front
XIV Panzer Corps	
389 Infantry Division	Eastern Front

(Taken from Charles Messenger's *The Chronological Atlas of World War II*, Macmillan Publishing Company, 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.)



At the end of a combat phase, you can access an overall briefing as well as a detailed breakdown of every engagement.

1942 and January of 1943, and the variety of missions and the amount of territory involved in re-creating them necessitated the biggest and most obvious change to the World at War engine. Zabalaoui says that "in *Stalingrad*, there are three different map scales at work; that's never been true of any of our earlier games. All our previous games were based on the 1km per hex scale, except for *Crusader*, which was something like 2.25km per hex. For Stalingrad, there are three hex scales — 3km, 1km, and 400m." Thanks to this change, beginning players can start out with more manageable (yet extremely challenging) city-based combat, then gradually increase the number of troops under their control as they gain experience.

The interface players will be using to control their forces has undergone a couple of big changes, too. Complete Order of Battle charts are available for both Russian and German forces in all seven scenarios, but Atomic didn't stop there — Zabalaoui says the *Stalingrad* programmers are trying to incorporate a feature that will let you attach units to HQs from the Order of Battle itself, which would greatly streamline an important part of gameplay.

Another addition is an Overview map, which shows you the entire area of operations. Better yet, an array of buttons allows you to gradually add various unit types to the map, giving nearly instant information on where the forces you need are located.

"We've ended up rewriting the supply rules for every game we've done. With *Operation Crusader*, we introduced supply depots; in *Stalingrad*, the Germans often trace supply from airfields, and you can actually move supply around from airfield to airfield."
— *Keith Zabalaoui*

One of the most intriguing things about *Stalingrad* is the number of variants Atomic has included, most of which come into play in the larger scenarios. With a single mouse click you can eliminate the horrific consequences of Stalin's purges of the military during the Thirties; enhance Soviet logistics, communications, and supply; and even make the Soviet commanders have more initiative. German variants are also exciting, in that they give hope to players who feel that the Germans could have won the day had Hitler not had total control over the entire General Staff. With options to receive critical reinforcements in November of '42, as well as remove troops from the Caucasus to send to the aid of the beleaguered garrison at Stalingrad, you'll find the Germans have more than a fighting chance at victory.

It was over 15 years ago that I first played Avalon Hill's classic board game *Stalingrad*; almost overnight I became a Russian Front fanatic, and ever since I've been searching for a PC game which could provide the same engrossing gameplay, yet with even more detail. Thanks to Avalon Hill and Atomic Games, it appears that my search is over.



You can assign a variety of tasks to your Staff to handle; if you're feeling particularly lazy, you can even let them run the whole show for a



For unit counters, you can choose between traditional military icons or the more readily recognizable "toy soldier" emblems.

A Different Kind of Warfare

(From *199 Days: The Battle for Stalingrad*, 1992, by Edwin P. Hoyt, Tom Doherty Associates, Inc., 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.)

The Germans never accommodated themselves to [city fighting]. They continued to use traditional methods of attack, battering at buildings with tanks and artillery, making frontal assaults that were always costly and sometimes disastrous.

German General Doerr had this to say about the fighting:

The time for conducting large-scale operations has gone forever; from the wide expanses of steppe land, the war moved to the jagged gullies of the Volga hills with their copses and ravines, into the factory area of Stalingrad, spread out over uneven, pitted, rugged country, covered with iron, concrete and stone buildings. The mile, as a measure of distance, was replaced by the yard. G.H.Q.'s map was the map of the city.

For every house, workshop, water tower, railway embankment, wall, cellar, and every pile of ruins, a bitter battle was waged, without equal even in the first world war with its vast expenditure of munitions. The distance between the enemy's army and ours was as small as it could possibly be. Despite the concentrated aircraft and artillery, it was impossible to break out of the area of close fighting. The Russians surpassed the Germans in their use of the terrain and in camouflage, and were more experienced in barricade warfare for individual buildings...

By the end of September when the fighting moved to the factory area, the Germans were losing their spirit for the conflict, as is shown in the entries of one diarist for the period of the battle so far:

Sept. 1: "Are the Russians really going to fight on the very bank of the Volga? It is madness...."
Sept. 8: "Insane stubbornness...."
Sept. 11: "Fanatics."
Sept. 13: "Wild beasts."
Sept. 16: "Barbarism... not men but devils."
Sept. 26: "Barbarians... they use gangster methods."

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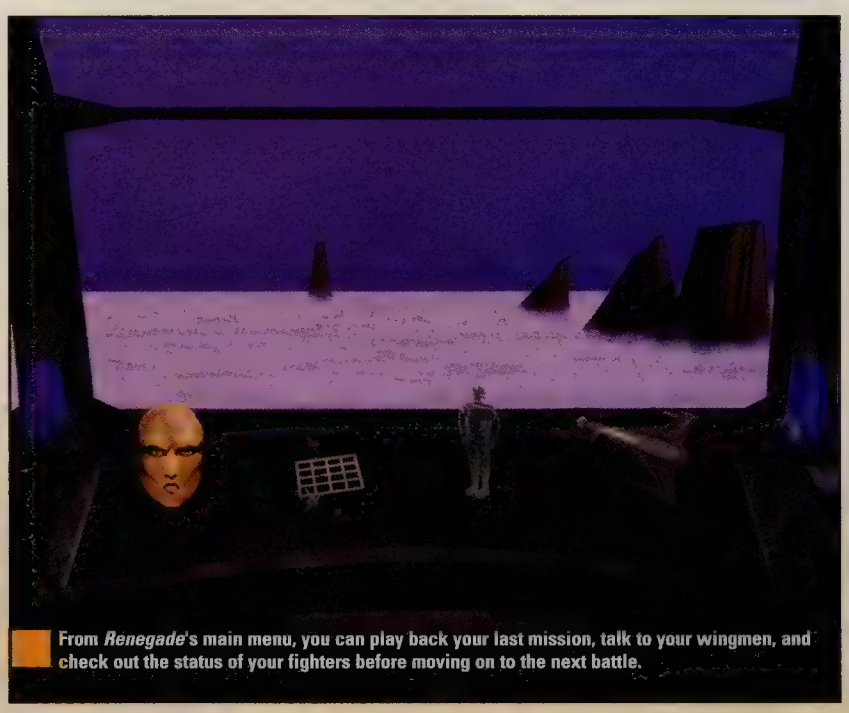
Product Information Number 108

Renegade: Battle f

SSI Takes Aim at Wing Commander

It takes big guns to challenge Origin's grip on the space-combat crown, but SSI may have the firepower to do it.

by Dan Bennett



From *Renegade*'s main menu, you can play back your last mission, talk to your wingmen, and check out the status of your fighters before moving on to the next battle.

FYI
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Game: *Renegade: Battle for Jacob's Star*
Developer: Midnight Software
Publisher: SSI, 675 Almanor Ave., Suite 201, Sunnyvale, CA 94086 (408)737-6800
Projected Price: $69.95
Percent Complete: 60

In a nutshell:

Renegade: Battle for Jacob's Star is a top-notch space-fighter sim, painted in beautiful brushstrokes on the rich canvas of FASA's *Renegade Legion*'s board-based roleplaying system.

What's so special?

Gorgeous, texture-mapped Super VGA graphics and 3D-rendered cinematic sequences make *Renegade* a undeniable visual feast.

Why should I care?

While SSI isn't known for action games, they haven't cut any corners in making /Renegade a state-of-the-art product.

And when's it coming out?

Just in time for Christmas.

Origin's series of *Wing Commander* space-combat sims have been among the top-selling computer games in the history of the industry, and the Austin-based company recently topped itself with the multi-million-dollar *Wing Commander III*. So what kind of nerve does it take for another company to throw its hat into the space combat ring?

Maybe it just takes the right kind of ammunition. SSI is betting on a combination of a popular license — the *Renegade Legion: Interceptor* board game from FASA — and some state-of-the-art sights and sounds to put a dent in Origin's deflector shields.

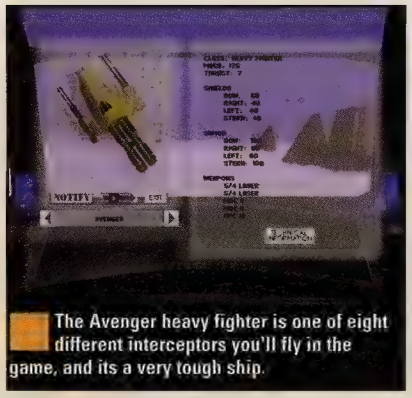
SSI first exploited the FASA license several years ago with *Renegade Legion: Interceptor*, basically a computerized version of the board game. But SSI associate producer David Lucca says the seeds for an action game had already been planted, and the *Interceptor* team kept saying, "Wouldn't this be cool as a flight sim?"

When SSI got a chance to work with Midnight Software, Lucca says, they were at first looking at the possibility of doing a straight flight simulation — until the *Renegade Legion* license came back into the



You'll choose your own wingman before each mission. Here's hoping this guy's as tough as he thinks he is.

or Jacob's Star



The Avenger heavy fighter is one of eight different interceptors you'll fly in the game, and its a very tough ship.

picture. "But this is in no way a sequel," Lucca says. The computerized version of *Renegade Legion: Interceptor* was a strategy game with relatively simple graphics and sound; *Renegade: Battle for Jacob's Star* is a state-of-the-art action game.

Renegade Legion universe, it's the 64th century, and mankind has recovered from a long period of slavery under an alien race. Their liberators, now known as the Terran Overlord Government (TOG), have become oppressors themselves, and their forces have splintered. Those who oppose the TOG are known as the Renegade Legion.

In *Renegade*, the player is a rebel among rebels. "You're a hotshot," Lucca says, and you've just disobeyed yet another order as the game's story begins. Your superiors ship you off to Jacob's Star, a backwater supply



Your lasers catch up with this TOG Spiculum ...

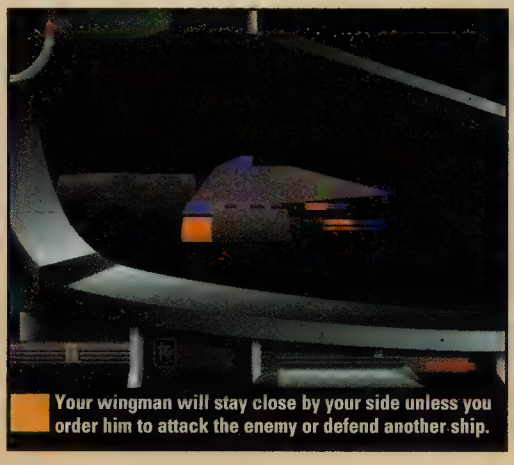
> **"It's kind of like a 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' sort of scenario."**
> ***— David Lucca, associate producer***

That doesn't mean the game's designers have thrown out the board game connection, though. Lucca says *Renegade* will feature all the ships from the FASA game, and the simulation handles damage in accordance with the critical-hit rules from *Interceptor*. The system of ranking players and wingmen is also taken from FASA's rules.

Renegade derives its rich background from the board game, too. In the station, where you can sit around and meditate on the virtues of obedience along with all of the other outcasts from the Legion.

"It's kind of like a 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' sort of scenario," Lucca says, referring to the famed squadron of misfit pilots from World War II.

Naturally, Jacob's Star is destined for the spotlight. The action in *Renegade* takes place over one intense week, as you scramble to hold the line against TOG forces until reinforcements can arrive.



Your wingman will stay close by your side unless you order him to attack the enemy or defend another ship.

In the meantime, you'll have to manage your resources carefully. New ships will eventually become available, but your handful of wingmen are all you get. That means you'll need to pay close attention to the pilots under your command; they'll let you know if they're too fatigued to fly another mission, or if they're eager to get back out and make the kills they need for an impending promotion. Occasionally, they'll just tell you they don't *want* to fly the mission you've got planned. But remember, these guys are here for the same reason you are — an overabundance of free will.



... and his career ends with a spectacular bitmapped bang.

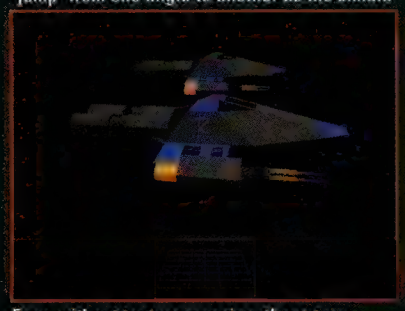
The computer offers a little assistance in planning missions; briefings will include recommendations on the type and number of ships to assign. But you're free to take this advice or leave it — you may want to take more interceptors along, or to cut corners as the campaign continues and more of your ships are damaged. Interceptors can go out with damage, but you may be better off leaving them at home to be repaired.

The difficulty of *Renegade* can be adjusted in a few different ways. At the start, players have the option of choosing a level that sounds best for them, but as the game develops, the difficulty will change depending on how successful the player is. Gamers who do particularly well at one level will find themselves facing tougher enemy pilots, or they may be kicked into an alternate plot path where the missions are harder. "There are a lot of things we can tweak for each level," Lucca said.

Mapping the Way to Realism

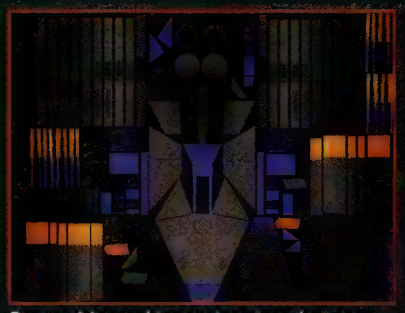
Some of the hottest buzz-words in the computer gaming industry are "texture mapping." But what do they mean, exactly? Texture mapping is just the latest in a succession of techniques aimed at making 3D computer graphics look more realistic.

The first air-combat simulators weren't 3D at all; games like Spectrum Holobyte's original *Falcon* and *Battlehawks: 1942* from Lucasfilm Games (now LucasArts) used bitmaps — two-dimensional pictures — to represent planes and other objects. A fixed number of these bitmaps were used to represent different viewing angles on the same plane, so enemy fighters always looked as if they were approaching from head-on or from some multiple of 45 degrees, no matter what the actual angle was. As they flew past, they tended to "jump" from one angle to another as the simulation switched to a new bitmap.



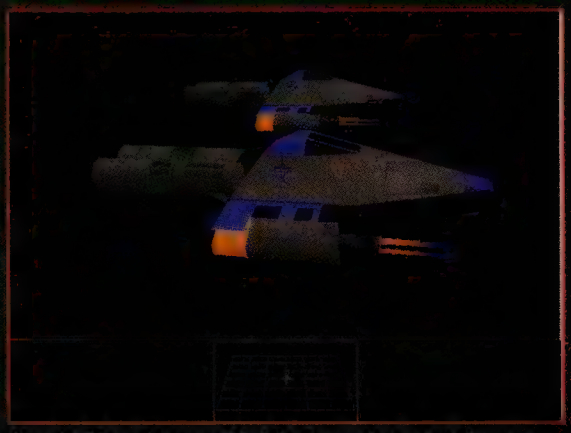
Even without texture mapping, these two Avenger interceptors look great.

The next step in simulations was polygon graphics. First appearing in games like MicroProse's *F-19 Stealth Fighter*, the polygon method borrowed technology from computer-aided design (CAD) systems to create three-dimensional models of objects which could be zoomed in and out and rotated through an infinite number of angles. The advantage of polygon graphics was a stronger 3D feel — planes looked the way the should when viewed at any range and from any angle. The disadvantage was a loss of detail; each face of the polygons that made up an object had to be a solid color. Also, manipulating polygon shapes took considerably more computer power than bitmaps. That's why bitmaps were still being used in some relatively recent games, like Origin's *Privateer* and *Wing Commander Academy*.



Renegade's graphics engine gives the interceptors a paint job with these highly-detailed texture maps.

Enter texture mapping, another trick borrowed from the world of high-end computer graphics. This technique combines the best of both worlds by superimposing detailed bitmapped images — texture maps — over polygon-based 3D objects. Texture mapping is what gives those pipe-covered walls in *Doom* their eerily slimy appearance, and it's what makes the space fighters in *Renegade: Battle for Jacob's Star* look like the real thing.



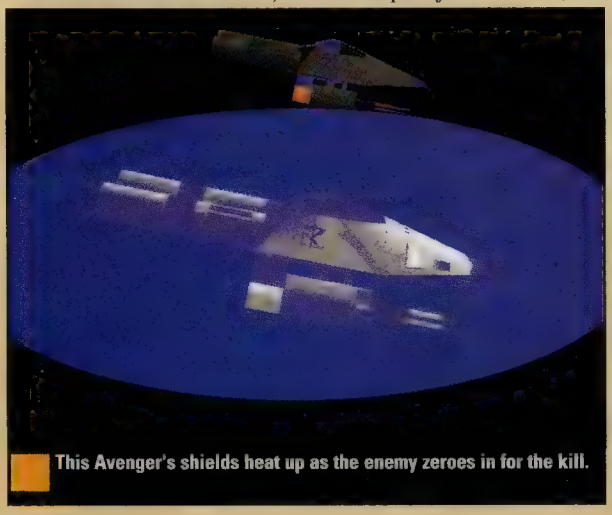
After the 3D graphics are added the Avenger's turn into the meanest-looking fighters in the computerized galaxy!

Renegade's most striking feature is its Super VGA graphics engine: The texture-mapped spaceships are executed at 640x480 in 256 colors. Since most games still run at a resolution of 320x200, *Renegade* has a strikingly realistic look. The texture-mapped details on each space fighter are crystal clear and utterly believable. But Lucca says the advanced graphics shouldn't put too much of a strain on gamers' computers. SSI recommends at least a 486/33MHz PC, but Lucca says he's seen the game run on a 386/40MHz machine, and it ran "pretty darn good."

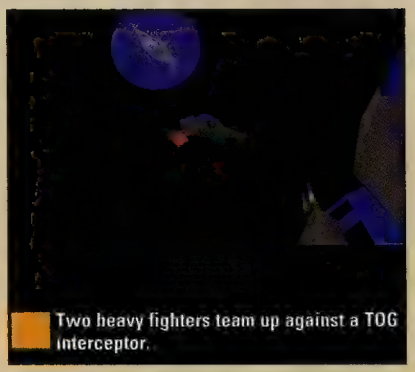
The game will manage exterior views in a way similar to the Dynamix air combat sims — the basic views can be zoomed, panned, and tilted in any direction, and customized camera angles can be assigned to function keys for quick recall.

The CD-only game promises to be huge, too, with almost three hours of digitized speech. No big-name voices have been brought on board, but Lucca said SSI did go through AFTRA, the actors' union, to hire the players.

Renegade will also feature 250 megabytes of cinematic sequences created with the increasingly popular 3D Studio. In campaign mode, gamers will fly as many as 70 missions from a pool of 200. Best of all, the music in *Renegade* will use the Redbook audio format, which means it will be played directly off the disc the same way music CDs are played. This is good news for gamers who don't have the latest 16-bit, wavetable sound cards: Any CD-ROM drive and sound card capable of playing regular music discs will yield a CD-quality soundtrack — although you'll need separate speakers for your CD and sound card if your speakers don't allow you to two signals.



This Avenger's shields heat up as the enemy zeroes in for the kill.



Two heavy fighters team up against a TOG interceptor.

As a unique by-product of using the Redbook format, *Renegade* will let players replace the game disc with a music CD during play. "We actually got into kind of an argument about the type of music the game should have," Lucca said. The solution was to ship *Renegade* with its "industrial, techno-style" musical score, but to give gamers the option of listening to their own discs during combat. The game will prompt you when it needs the data disc — usually at the end of a combat mission. In the meantime, you can listen to your favorite tunes while you chase down the enemy — just like the kid in that cheesy air-combat movie, *Iron Eagle*.

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Product Information Number 114

The Lost Eden

Jurassic Park It Ain't

If you think living with dinosaurs is a walk in the park, then you haven't talked with young Prince Adam.

by Trent C. Ward



An example of the fantastic movement animations found within the game. The double doors of the throne room are detailed down to the wood grain.

As "interactive movies" and flashy, passive adventures continue to appeal to inexperienced gamers, it sometimes seems that the game publishers are forgetting about what makes PC gaming such a compelling hobby. Sure, games with the visual and audio quality of a feature film are impressive; but they have to offer a storyline with enough imagination and suspense to give practiced players a fresh new challenge, while allowing the kind of complete control we're used to. None of this *Dragon's Lair*-style left, right, up, or down nonsense: we want *interaction*.

Thankfully, with *The Lost Eden*, the veteran developers at Cryo are combining the next generation of graphics and sound technology with an intuitive interface and absorbing plot to create a title that's sure to spark interest in even veteran adventurers.

Lost Eden takes place in a strange and beautiful world marked by the advanced science and culture of both humans and evolved dinosaurs called saurians. As the game opens, an old pterodactyl named Eloi begins the tale of a brave prince and his friends. As his story progresses, you're pulled into the role of the young prince, Adam, on the day of his coming of age. Despite being heir to the throne of Mo, you've always dreamed of leaving the cares and concerns of the kingdom behind to become an adventurer.

You're summoned by your father, and hear a traveler from the north (who turns out to be a much younger Eloi) describe the violent destruction of a nearby village. Eloi goes on to finger the pow-



Your father, and current king of the land. A passive ruler, the king is convinced that the way to fight the enemy is to wait them out.



By visiting the tombs of your forebears, you may find secrets of their past glories.



No fortress would be complete without the tender intimacy of the torture chamber. Used by an evil king of your line, this room still has an evil feel about it.

FYI
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Developer: Cryo
Publisher: Virgin, 18061 Fitch Ave., Irvine, CA 92714
Release Date: 1st Quarter '95
MSRP: $74.99

In a nutshell:

Lost Eden throws you into a believable, detailed, and compelling world where dinosaurs and humans have evolved together and coexisted peacefully for years — until now, that is.

What's so special?

Lost Eden is a great example of how to make an exciting game *without* all of the full motion video and other gimmicks that are beginning to replace good old-fashioned gameplay.

Why should I care?

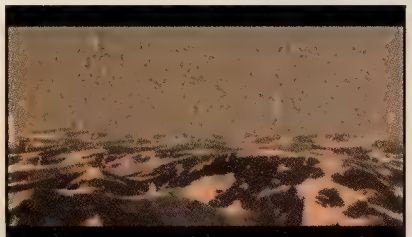
If titles like this one manage to gain a foothold with the hordes of eager newcomers to the electronic gaming world, it may keep experienced gamers from being forced to playing *Rebel Assault* clones for the next three years.

And when's it coming out?

First Quarter 1995

erful warlord Moorkus Rex and his band of carnivores in the kidnapping or murder of every human in the ill-fated town. Worried that your home may be next, your father orders you to remain in the castle until the threat is over.

Shortly after the meeting, Eloi gives you a message from a female saurian named Dina (get it?). After a warning from Eloi, Dina helps you escape the castle and takes you to the side of her dying grandfather, Tau. Tau tells you the story of your family's past, describing your great-grandfather as a talented architect who built huge citadels to protect the land from



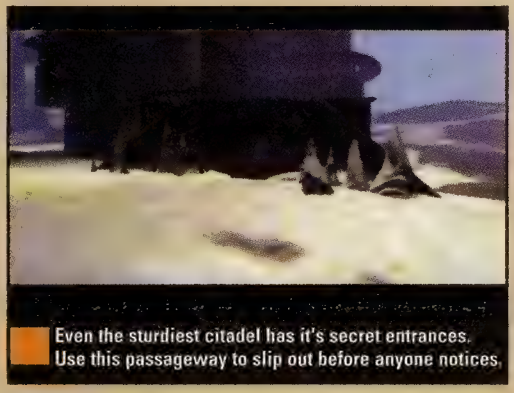
The hazy technique used on the images takes off the sharp edges that are usually so prevalent in this kind of rendered artwork.

danger. He then says that the last vestiges of this ancestor's knowledge lie hidden in mysterious catacombs — a tidbit too tantalizing to pass up. From beginning to end, the story keeps the player involved. And by constantly introducing new and increasingly difficult obstacles, it both challenges and entertains you.

Like *Dune*, another Cryo project, *Lost Eden* uses incredibly detailed images to bring this fantastic world of man and dinosaur to life. And unlike many of the new adventures on shelf today, which utilize full-motion in an attempt at realism, all of the images in the game were created by computer artists. Their painstaking care and attention to detail really pays off, and after a few scenes you'll find yourself identifying with the often bizarre characters and their game world as if they were real.

That's crucial since realism — or at least believability — were of paramount importance to the design team. Diarmid Clarke, the producer of *Lost Eden*, says, "If something didn't work, we'd take it out and start all over again. One of our earlier ideas was to have the saurians fighting with weapons. The end result just didn't seem realistic, so we took it out."

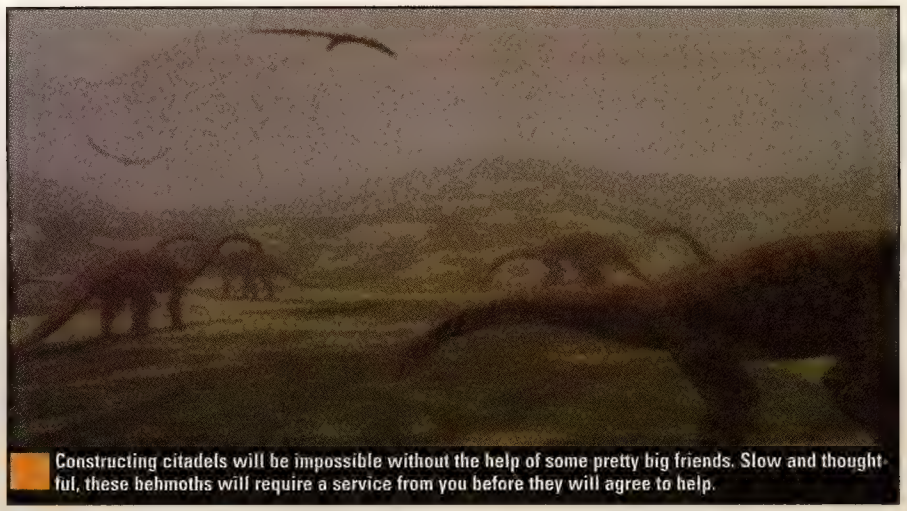
Novelist Steve Jackson, probably best known in the U.S. for his "Fighting Fantasy" roleplaying novels, was a part of the crew behind *Lost Eden*. In addition to working on the story line, Jackson helped the team come up with more realistic ways of approaching the unique characters and their individual cultures — and of creating a viable reality in which they could coexist.



Even the sturdiest citadel has it's secret entrances. Use this passageway to slip out before anyone notices.

The movement and scenery animations are similar in many ways to titles like Trilobyte's *7th Guest* or Mindscope's *Dragon Lore*. Each click in a given direction actually carries the player's point of view through a vivid, rendered animation of travel, instead of the "jump-cut" technique used in Westwood's *Lands of Lore*, or the standard third-person, click-and-move system used by Sierra, LucasArts, and others. The end result is breathtaking, and gives the player a sense of actually moving through a unique world.

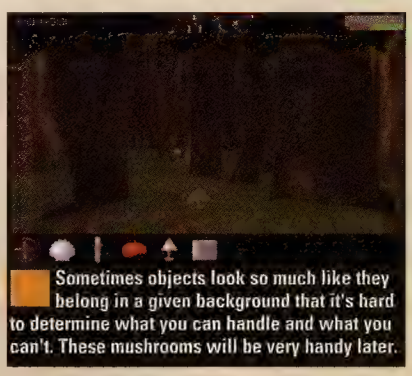
To complete the illusion, the developers not only had to make the characters look real, but also had to make them *sound* real.



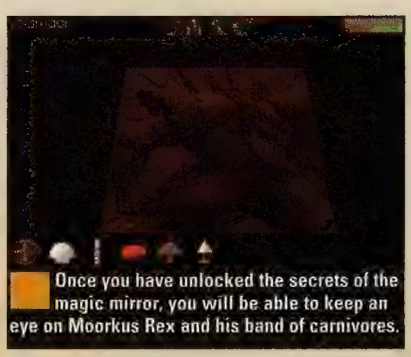
Constructing citadels will be impossible without the help of some pretty big friends. Slow and thoughtful, these behmoths will require a service from you before they will agree to help.

"If something didn't work, we'd take it out and start over again"

— Diarmid Clarke, producer of *The Lost Eden*



Sometimes objects look so much like they belong in a given background that it's hard to determine what you can handle and what you can't. These mushrooms will be very handy later.



Once you have unlocked the secrets of the magic mirror, you will be able to keep an eye on Moorkus Rex and his band of carnivores.

Every member of the virtual cast has been fleshed out with the some of the best voice acting I've encountered in a game. As they tried to stay true to the realism prevalent throughout *Lost Eden*, the designers ran into the obvious question of just how a walking, talking dinosaur would sound. "We had great fun with that, actually," Clarke says. Once again turning to Steve Jackson, the team described what kind of creature and personality they were dealing with. Working together, the author and developers came up with a number of voice theories. From there, the sound team began trying different delays and distortions to try to create a voice that sounded just right.

In the end, though, the actors sounded more realistic without any manipulation at all. "We would just explain to the actors things like 'The Pterodactyl has a high screechy voice,' and the cast would just go from there." The team also had to come up with languages for dinosaurs that were actually losing their ability to speak. In the end, the most impressive-sounding creatures in the game are the gargantuan brontasaurs, whose deteriorating lan-

An Unlikely Alliance

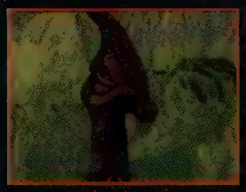
As you progress through *The Lost Eden*, you'll come across adventurers of several different races — both hominid and saurian — who'll be willing to join you on your quest. Trust between the races doesn't come easily, so you'll need to earn the respect and love of your followers if you expect them to be able to work together.



Your character prince Adam is an impulsive young man who wishes to learn more about the world around him. As the next great architect, you hold the power to drive the carnivore back into hiding.



The narrator of the story, Eloi, also shows up during the game as one of your most trusted companions. His advice isn't always very helpful, but his speed and loyalty make him an excellent messenger.



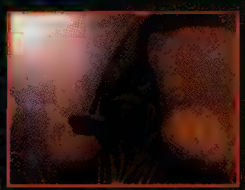
The first saurian who will join your cause, Dina's ability to understand any language makes her your most important companion.



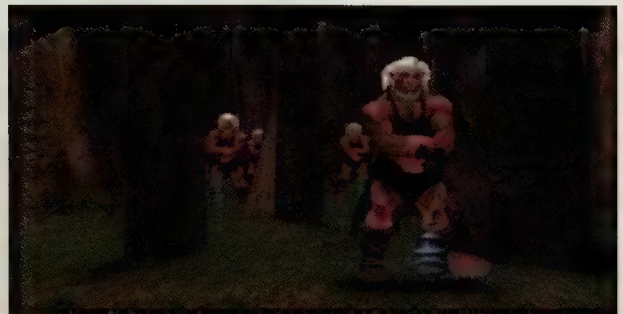
Dina's mate Mungo also has the ability to understand other tongues, but is most important for the powerful friendships he has with leaders of the different tribes.



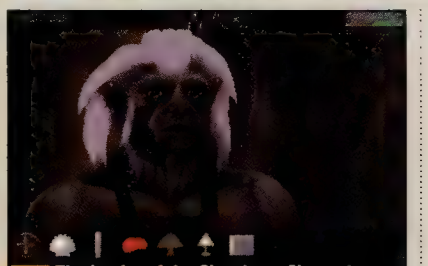
Your father's addition to your team, Thugg, will do his best to keep you safe at all times. Unfortunately, Thugg isn't able to grasp concept more complex than a couple of sentences.



Dina's Grandfather acts a spiritual guide for your quest, and will offer help whenever he can by communicating with you by means of a magic shell. His advice is always dead on target.



Eden 21- Ready to avenge the destruction of their village, these Chorrian warriors will aid you in the construction of a new citadel.



The leader of the Chorrians, Chong, is a careful and intelligent leader. Convince him to join you.

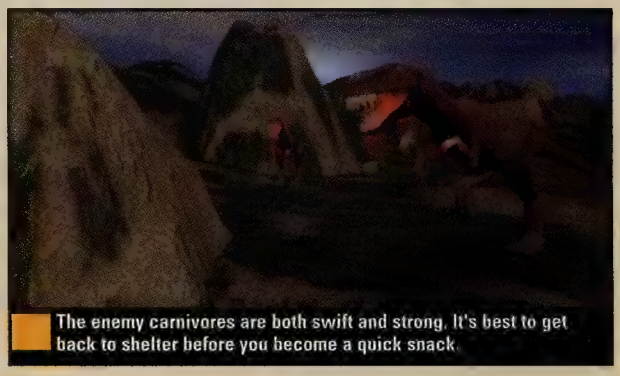
guage sounds like a cross between barbarian growls and whale songs.

No matter how good a game looks and sounds, everything is lost if players find it difficult or frustrating to control the action. In order to make the most seamless interface possible, Cryo took a long look at what people liked and disliked about their *Dune* interface. "The most important thing about the control method was that it had to be easy," Clarke explains. "As it stands now, anything in the game can be done with a left mouse click. We wanted it to be a game that anyone could just pick up and play."

Players control everything through the use of a multi-purpose pointer, which takes the form of a spinning stone box. When placed on different objects onscreen, the icon will show all of the possible interaction choices available for that object or area. The options are the usual graphic-adventure fare, and include movement, picking up and using items, and conversation.

One unique aspect of *Lost Eden* is the ability to actually consult with the persons in your party. By clicking on a small graphic representation of Adam and the current party members at the top of the screen, players can access a second screen that allows them to talk within the group. Many of the problems in the game can only be overcome by utilizing the individual skills of another party member, so it's important to keep tabs on the talents and abilities of your companions.

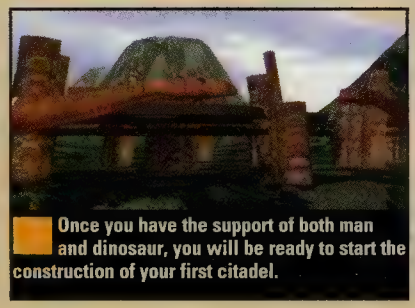
Equally as important is the careful use of the various items of power you will encounter on your journey; much of the game's puzzle content is in figuring out how to use different talismans in the proper situation. One of the most important items you'll receive is a shell that allows you to speak with the spirit of Dina's dead grandfather. Double clicking on this fetish will bring up a quick hint from the spirit during most situations, and acts as on-line help for players who are encountering difficulty with a specific problem. Other items can produce spectacular magic effects, or merely act as encouragement for characters who are in need of support.



The enemy carnivores are both swift and strong. It's best to get back to shelter before you become a quick snack.

Lost Eden impressed me with the way it incorporates cutting-edge graphics and sound, while staying true to the complexities and interaction that have always marked the best PC games. The phenomenal art, edge-of-your-seat storyline, and inspired vocals all blend to create a surprisingly believable reality — and most importantly, one that's completely accessible to the player. In this day of all-talk, no-show CD-ROMs, it's refreshing to see a title that moves forward technologically without leaving behind the spirit that made PC gaming so gratifying in the first place.

PCG



Once you have the support of both man and dinosaur, you will be ready to start the construction of your first citadel.

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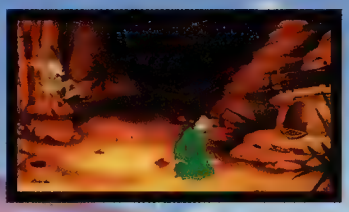
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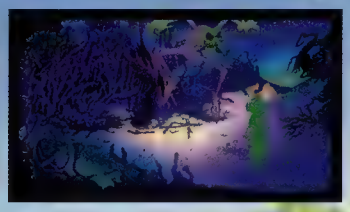
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Word to Your Mother!

The quest for a kinder, gentler rating system

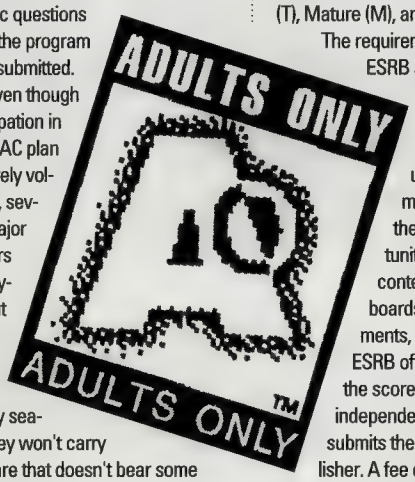
Before another Congressional hearing on violence in computer games can gain momentum, the software industry is trying to establish a voluntary system for rating games that can be universally accepted, and applied without infringing on the creativity of software designers and developers.

In fact, two separate groups are trying to put their own ratings in place. One group, which is quickly gaining acceptance, is the non-profit Recreational Software Advisory Council (RSAC), established by the Software Publishing Association (SPA) with the support of several parental advocacy groups. It was recently announced that Robert Roden, general council for LucasArts, was elected president of the RSAC.

During his involvement with the SPA government affairs committee, Roden developed an interest in creating an objective system of ratings to guide consumers in their purchases — one that goes beyond suggesting appropriate age groups to actually advise potential buyers of the content.

The way RSAC hopes to inform consumers is through the use of ratings guides placed on the participant's packaging. The ratings will be scored from zero to four, with three categories of "offenses" — violence (that old hang-dog), sex/nudity (er, uh, pardon me, ma'am), and adult language (just in time for Christmas). A zero score across all categories would mean the product in question is acceptable for all audiences. A score of one or higher would denote the level of violence, sex or language, with four being highest in all categories.

The RSAC will compile the ratings with RSAC-designed software, which asks a program's developer specific questions about the program being submitted. And even though participation in the RSAC plan is entirely voluntary, several major retailers are saying that beginning this holiday season they won't carry software that doesn't bear some form of rating.



One of the first developers to apply the new RSAC ratings will be LucasArts, who'll use them beginning this fall.

The other ratings system, proposed by the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA), will be administered by *its* own creation — the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). The ESRB is headed by Dr. Arthur Pober, former vice president and director of the Children's Advertising Review Unit of the Council for Better Business Bureaus. And although it was founded by industry giants Electronic Arts, Sega of America, and Sony Electronic Publishing (among others), the IDSA promises the ESRB will be independent of industry pressure.

The ESRB evaluates software by first having each title reviewed by "three demographically diverse individuals with no ties to the industry." The ESRB then rates the titles using a system similar to that used by the movie industry: Games can be classified Early Childhood (EC), Kids to Adults (KA), Teen (T), Mature (M), and Adults Only (AO).

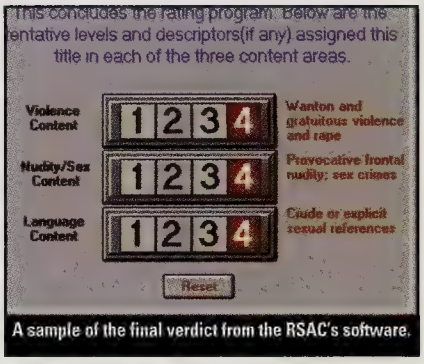
The requirements for review by ESRB are that a publisher must submit the most graphic portions of their product through a format that would allow the reviewers opportunity to assess that content — i.e., storyboards, videotaped segments, and demos. An ESRB official then tallies the scores from the three independent reviewers and submits the results to the publisher. A fee of $500.00 is applied to each title submitted for review regardless of IDSA membership, although a lower fee is available to smaller publishers. Publishers also have an opportunity to appeal any rating thought to be unjust.

Regardless of which system is used to rate games, the real question is whether or not a ratings system will limit creativity. We here at *PC Gamer* feel that, while both ratings systems seem to have the noblest of intentions, are far less intrusive than any mandated proposal that congress might impose, and probably won't affect what is being developed at the moment, ratings *will* have an affect in the not-to-distant future.

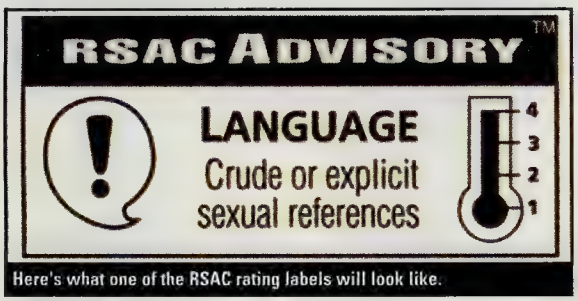
Just look at the movie industry, where the top-grossing films typically fall into the R category. Aware of this, studios often go out of their way to create films that can achieve this rating — sometimes, it seems, by *adding* unnecessary sex and/or violence. If this trend follows in the gaming industry, much of the diversity and innovation being displayed in today's games might be lost as designers "force" higher ratings to earn the higher sales that will accompany them. In fact, such a scenario would almost ensure that there are *more* "adult" games released than there are now, which would seem to be just the opposite of what the watchdog groups wanted in the first place.

Also, smaller publishers will be sure to exploit the fact that a game they submitted scored high in sex/violence/language, or was rejected because of its, content in hopes of receiving added publicity. Whole publishing houses might come into being, specializing in designing titles that feature sub-par gameplay with excessive violence and sexual content.

On the other side of it, there are just as many times when adult content is the only way to add the right depth to a story, game, or film. But if a publisher fears distributing anything *above* an R rating, designers will be forced to alter their works to please some pre-conceived audience.

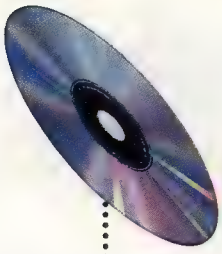


A sample of the final verdict from the RSAC's software.



Here's what one of the RSAC rating labels will look like.

No one knows yet what'll ultimately come of these new ratings. But it seems certain, at least to us, that they'll significantly affect the future of PC gaming. Whether that's good or bad for us gamers is the big unanswered question.



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The Biz Guy Cometh

id Software's Jay Wilbur has his own ideas about game ratings

If you play computer games, you know id Software's *Doom*. Love it or hate it — and we love it — you have to admit that *Doom* revolutionized PC gaming, from its shareware-only release (which has prompted many big-name publishers to offer free demo versions of their new games) to its incredible first-person graphics engine (which has prompted many big-name publishers to create their own games with first-person graphics engines).

With the release of *Doom II: Hell on Earth*, id's products are now available through traditional software retailers, but "traditional" is the last word you'd use to describe the Texas-based company — as you can tell by this recent interview with id Software's "Biz Guy" Jay Wilbur.

PCG: How do you and the guys at id feel when someone says, "The number-one PC game in the world is *Doom*." It's something every developer, every programmer dreams of.

JW: It gives us a warm and tingly feeling. Of course, it tickles the hell out of us — we couldn't be happier. But it also drives us to continue make great games. We don't want to just sit back on our laurels and say, "We did it! Let's all go party and forget about it." That's not going to happen. Instead, we work on the next game, *Quake*. I can't tell you a whole lot about *Quake*, because, quite frankly, we don't even know that much about it ourselves yet. But knowing that we have the number one game now is incentive for us to stay there.



PCG: When you were a kid, did you ever play *Doom* games with your toys? Blow up Barbie and Ken with a BFG?

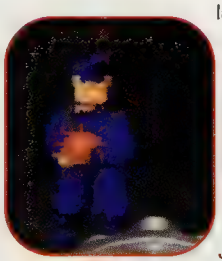
JW: Oh, yes. We were dumb. The big firecracker was the M-80. We would find various creative ways to use M-80's to make things go away. Never convicted, though.

PCG: What effect do you think *Doom*'s had on game design as a whole?

JW: We're seeing plenty of "*Doom*-alikes" starting to pop up now, not just from small operations but from very large operations. Big companies are jumping in with *Doom*-like games. *Wolfenstein* really spawned the 3D action genre; *Doom* sort of took it up a notch. And it's created a whole new category of games.

PCG: Yeah, there's no doubt about that — people tend to imitate success. But *why* do you think is *Doom* so incredibly successful?

JW: Immersion. You don't play the game. You become one with the game. It was true with *Wolfenstein 3-D*, but much more so with *Doom*. I've heard stories where people are playing the game, and someone walks up and says, "Your car's being ripped off," or whatever — and they just don't care. They're playing *Doom*, they've got blinders on, so just leave 'em alone. It's a fantasy world that you can jump right into with both feet and stay.



PCG: Do you ever get sick of all the attention?

JW: Yeah.... It's becoming a problem. We're not getting any work done, because we're too busy talking to y'all. It sucks. [Laughs] No, we enjoy it but it reaches a point where it's overkill.

PCG: Overkill? Sort of like you wiring your home for network *Doom* against Billie's [Jay's wife] wishes?

JW: Yes! I bought a P90 for myself riding on the fact that my boy Josh, who's 4, needed a computer for school because he's just starting. They were all over it, and I couldn't get anything done. So I got a DX2-50 for them. Now, we're wiring the whole house up for a network so we can play *Doom*, of course. We are a "two computing" family now, and I'm happy. Billie's happy too — and Josh! We had the damn thing hooked up less than a week, and he's a master at Deathmatch. He's great. We were playing *Doom* last night.

PCG: Some people have a problem with that. What do you say to people who think your games are nothing more than mindless killing?

JW: Don't buy it. Go play something else.

PCG: But you're considered the *creme de la creme* of violence games. When the hearing for ratings on computer games happens, do you think *Doom* and *Mortal Kombat* will be shuffled onto the floor before the Senate?



JW: I sure hope so. It would only help sales.

PCG: How do you feel about the ratings issue in general?

JW: I support it as long as it's not censorship. Censorship is a no-no — bad, bad, bad government! But a rating system? Providing the consumer with the firepower to make an informed decision is good. As consumers, we can all recognize that that's a good thing. It's sort of like reading how much sugar's in a cereal. If you don't want sugar, you look and say, "Well, there's a lot of sugar. I don't want this." If you want to buy a game with a lot of violence, you can look and say, "Oh, I want this game." I think it's good, and we support it.

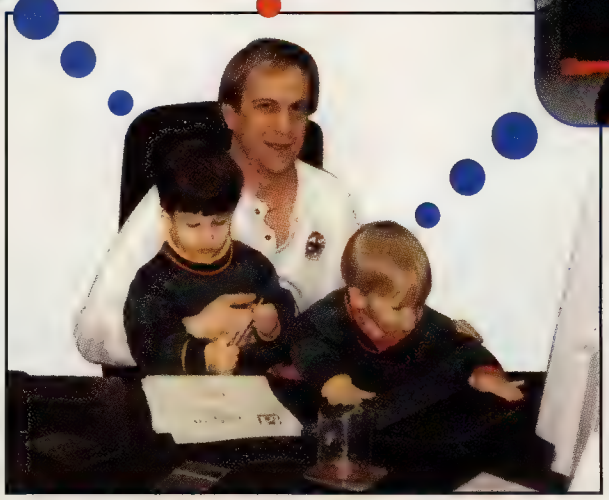
PCG: But you're totally opposed to censorship in game design.

JW: Not just in games, but in entertainment in general — people who blame the violent acts of individuals on entertainment, television, computer games, novels, whatever. I think they're looking for scapegoats instead of accepting the fact that some people are violent. Quite frankly, I would like to know what video game spawned The Crusades.

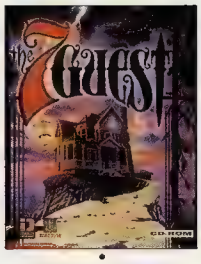
PCG: So what *is* the reason?

JW: Personally, I think it's because of the extinction of the family in the United States, but that's a whole other thing. I get kind of upset when someone says that if a kid plays *Doom*, it's going to turn his mind to mush, and he'll try to grab a chainsaw and sneak out and take down people at McDonald's. Whoever

Continued on page 38...



id Software's head Biz Guy Jay Wilbur, with his sons Josh and Nick. Jay's got them hooked on *Doom* — but in the right way.





Your clues are hidden in the whispers of floating apparitions. Eerie piano music could be a sign of danger. Warnings come to you through strange murmurs. So, if you want to unravel Old Man Stauf's bizarre secrets, keep your eyes peeled, your

One by one the guests arrive. Then the party really starts howling.

nerves steady, and your ears open. And take this hint—make sure you have a Sound Blaster sound card. Every bone-chilling shriek, hair-raising scream, and breathless gasp in *The 7th Guest*™ seems terrifyingly real when played on a Sound Blaster. Forget about getting out alive without one.

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...Continued from page 36

says and actually believes that is an idiot. I firmly believe he's an idiot.

PCG: So you believe it's the family — or, to be more precise, the lack of it — that's causing the problem in the first place?

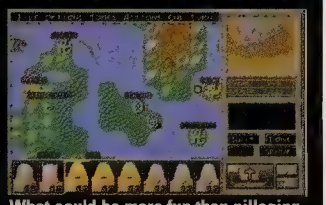
JW: Well, look at the Japanese. They're masters at violence in entertainment. We can only bow in reverence to their mastery of the art of violence in entertainment. Yet they don't even begin to have the kind of crime problems that we have. Why? Because family is a crucial part of their social makeup. They revere the family more than anything. I can't help but feel that's the reason. The reason why my boy plays *Doom* and won't be affected is because I spend time with him. We're one big family. He will know the difference between right and wrong, fantasy and reality, because I have taught him.

PCG: And so, with censorship, the government takes that away?

JW: Yeah. Censorship is the government making my decision as the parent. And they better not do that.

The PC Gamer Playlist

You know that Christmas is right around the corner when so many good games arrive in such a short period of time. Matt and Gary were immediately hooked by *Under a Killing Moon*, and one look at the chart will give you an idea of the impact that the pre-beta version of LucasArts' *Dark Forces* had on production.



What could be more fun than pillaging Europe with these party animals?

The arrival of *Legend of Kyrandia III* took a heavy toll on the Art and Production folks, and the mini golf tourneys we set up with *PGA Tour Golf 486* didn't help things, either. Eddie and Todd couldn't stay out of the driver's seat with *NASCAR Racing*, and Joe just couldn't stop slaughtering and pillaging as a Viking conqueror in *Hammer of the Gods*. Steve enjoyed some quiet time with *Stalingrad*, but that was only because there was no sound in the preview version he was playing. And Matt decided he'd finally do something about the long-standing feud between humans and orcs by wiping out one or the other in *Warcraft*. What a thoughtful guy!

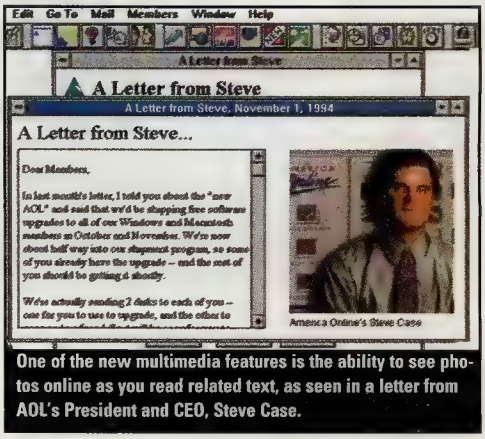
1) *Under a Killing Moon* (Access) — Gary, Matt, Shelli
2) *Dark Forces* (LucasArts) — Everyone
3) *Doom II: Hell on Earth* (id Software) — Matt, Todd, Joe
4) *NASCAR Racing* (Papyrus) — Steve, Eddie, Todd
5) *System Shock* (Origin) — Matt, Todd
6) *Legend of Kyrandia III* (Virgin) — Shelli, Scotty, Gary
7) *PGA Tour Golf 486* (EA) — Scotty, Eddie, Steve
8) *Hammer of the Gods* (New World Computing) — Joe, Matt
9) *Stalingrad* (Avalon Hill) — Steve, Gary
10) *Warcraft* (Blizzard) — Matt, Joe, Gary

Rate Wars on the Information Superhighway?

One of the nation's biggest online services has just lowered its rates, but it remains to be seen if its competitors will follow suit

America Online may not have as many members as, say, CompuServe, but the ones they do have apparently like to get online a lot. In October, AOL announced that they're handling over 750,000 log-ins per day (Prodigy claims up to 700,000 sessions a day). And that number stands a good chance of growing even more, thanks to the rates that became effective this past October.

The monthly membership fee of $9.95 gives users 5 hours of America Online, regardless of where they go or what they do — without any surcharge for 9600 baud or primetime access. That includes unlimited e-mail, download, uploads — you name it. But the biggest change is the new rate for time beyond the initial five hours — a mere $2.95 per hour, again regardless of where you go or what you do online — at any time of day.

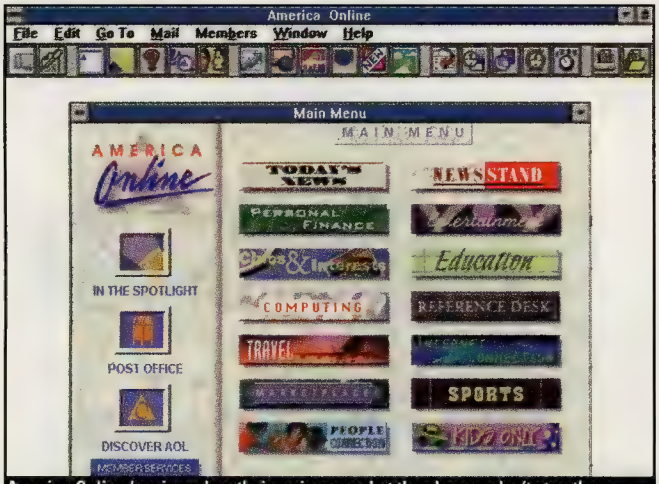


One of the new multimedia features is the ability to see photos online as you read related text, as seen in a letter from AOL's President and CEO, Steve Case.

In a statement explaining the new rate structure, AOL President and CEO Steve Case said, "By reducing our hourly rate, we are saying `Thank you' to our most active customers, those who use more than the 5 hours they get [with their $9.95 membership fee]."

Along with the new pricing comes a new version of the America Online software. The new software which America Online calls the Multimedia version, includes an "instant photo" feature that allows you to almost instantaneously view a photo before and/or during a download. Other additions to the service include ABC Online, MTV Online, National Museum of American History, and a Nature Conservancy forum.

America Online already has over one million members, and the new rate structure will undoubtedly lure many more modem owners to the service. The big question, though, is whether or not AOL's major competitors — CompuServe, GEnie, and Prodigy — will respond with lower rates of their own. We'll keep you posted on any developments.



America Online has jazzed up their main menu, but the changes don't stop there. There are several new multimedia features to the latest version of AOL.





Armored warriors ride the wings of flying dragons. Trolls devise a surprise attack. To survive, you'll need to stay alert. And have a Sound Blaster sound card. In *Dragon Lore*, every nuance of battle comes

Between the roaring dragon and the screeching trolls, you can hardly hear yourself think.

to life with synchronized speech and sound effects. Bones crumble beneath your broadsword. A flailing mace rips through chainmail. And you hear it all with Sound Blaster. Just think of it as your most important weapon.

Sound BLASTER

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Bye Bye, CES-I

The first Consumer Electronics Show Interactive has been postponed until 1996

If you've only heard of the Consumer Electronics Show from references in *PC Gamer* and other computer gaming magazines (yes, there are others out there), you might get the impression that the show existed solely to spotlight interactive entertainment software. But in reality videogames, entertainment software, and other interactive entertainment products account for only a third of the exhibitors — and software publishers have been expressing apprehensions for several years now that they are overshadowed at CES by manufacturers of home electronics products such as stereos, televisions, VCRs, and so forth.

In response to these concerns, the Electronic Industries Association Consumer Electronics Group (EIA/CEG) planned a new show — the Consumer Electronics Show Interactive — scheduled for May 11-13 1995 in Philadelphia. CES-I would have focused on gaming hardware and software, videogames and cartridge-based game systems, computers, multimedia systems, and the peripherals that go along with them.

The operative phrase here is "would have," however, because this past October EIA/CEG announced that it was postponing the first CES-I until 1996. Why the setback? Because publishing giant IDG, sensing that software publishers were not happy with CES, had previously announced its own industry show, the Electronic Entertainment Expo (or E3 — don't you just love these acronyms?) — and EIA/CEG had begun to realize two things: that software houses weren't going to go to both shows, and that the show of choice for summer '95 was E3.

This is undoubtedly a blow for EIA/CEG, and the company tried to put as good a spin as possible on the postponement. Vice-President of EIA/CEG Gary Shapiro explained the rescheduling this way: "After reviewing the pressure and stress put on potential exhibitors, buyers, and journalists to decide between two major industry shows being held at the same time, on two separate coasts, we chose to do what was best for the interactive industry and reschedule our show in 1995 to 1996. Although exhibit sales of CES-I were strong and early indications were that buyers preferred CES-I, we feel it will be better for the video game and interactive industries to have one show only during these dates and concentrate our efforts on a successful Winter CES for these segments and for the entire consumer electronics industry."

EIA plans to hold the first CES-I in Orlando in May, 1996 — but if E3 is successful, it doesn't seem likely that software publishers will be any more eager to go to two summer shows in 1996 than they are in 1995. But there's one bright spot for EIA: It's unlikely that anyone can steal the thunder from their winter CES in Las Vegas.

The Rebellion Wants You — But Not Just Yet

LucasArts announces January release for *Dark Forces*

If you were as excited as we were about the upcoming release of *Dark Forces* — featured in our October issue — we've got some good news and some bad news for you. We'll start with the bad news, which on second thought probably won't come as much of a surprise to PC gamers: LucasArts has delayed the release of *Dark Forces* until January 1995. The good news? LucasArts was kind enough to send us a preview version of the game, and we're here to tell ya it features the sort of action that made *Doom* such a hit, but with a few added twists — and knowing the guys at LucasArts, the chances are good that the final version will be even better still.

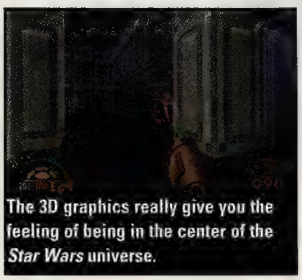


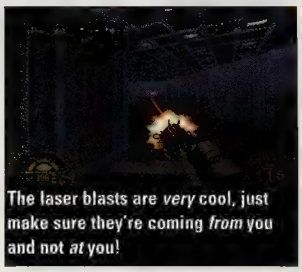
In *Dark Forces* there are plenty of the Emperor's boys in white armor just waiting to burn you a new one.

In *Dark Forces*, you fight the Empire as Kyle Katarn, one of the Rebellions' roguish mercenaries. The game's 3D engine literally hurls you into the Star Wars universe: The weapons look and sound like those in the films, with terrific lighting effects highlighting each laser blast. Level design and architecture are less mazelike than in Doom and more "authentic," making the places and planets you travel even more vital and realistic. And with options for looking up and down, crouching, jumping, and more, the game world of *Dark Forces* truly is three-dimensional.

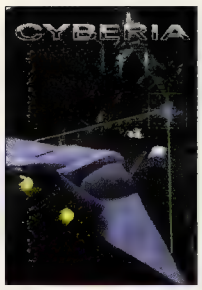
Each level has its own mission goals; in the first one, for instance, you have to find plans for the Death Star — you know, the same plans that the Rebellion forces used to destroy the Death Star in the first movie. Once you get into the game, you'll learn of the Dark Trooper, the newest — and perhaps deadliest — threat to the fledgling Rebellion.

There are a truckload of


The 3D graphics really give you the feeling of being in the center of the *Star Wars* universe.


The laser blasts are *very* cool, just make sure they're coming *from* you and not *at* you!

first-person action games headed your way, but *Dark Forces* plays so smoothly and has such a great storyline that it could jump right to the head of the pack. Oh, there's one other bit of news about the game, but whether or not it's bad depends on your system: LucasArts is planning to release the game only on CD-ROM. Now are you ready to make that CD-ROM purchase you've been putting off?





Destruction looms in the year 2027. Global terrorists threaten to capture a doomsday device in *Cyberia*. But you can stop them. Armed with your instincts and a Sound Blaster card, you experience every detail. Interact with synthetic 3-D

Ah, the crack and sizzle of another enemy ship turning to toast.

characters and move in a beautifully rendered world. Stunning sound effects and a full musical score make every action sequence breathtaking. Call it a truly original experience. And with Sound Blaster, it's unlike anything you've ever heard.

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Product Information Number 97

It's All In Your Mindscape

Mindscape proves that it's serious about gaming by purchasing one of the industry's oldest publishers

The past few months have seen Mindscape — formerly known as The Software Toolworks — move aggressively to stake a claim in the rapidly growing entertainment software market. And if there were any doubts as to whether the company was truly serious about its intentions to become a major player in the PC gaming industry, they were put to rest this past October 20th. That's when Mindscape announced its acquisition of Strategic Simulations, Inc. — SSI to you and me. What's more, the Novato, California-based company also acquired French game developer Atreid Concepts (*The Tinies, Fury of the Furries*).

SSI will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Mindscape, but don't expect to see any big shakeups at the company: Mindscape will handle distribution for SSI's current and future titles, while SSI will continue to control product design and marketing. As Mindscape's Public Relations Manager Kevin Bachus points out, "We bought the company for the people, and for the expertise they have."

Buyouts can sometimes be ugly affairs, but both Mindscape and SSI feel that in this case there are decided benefits for both companies. Bob Lloyd, Chairman and CEO of Mindscape, said that "SSI is a cornerstone in our efforts to establish Mindscape as a major player in the field of entertainment software. This acquisition augments our already-strong entertainment development expertise." Bachus echoed those sentiments: "The acquisition made sense for both companies. We've been looking to strengthen our entertainment profile, and we'll be the first to admit that we can learn a lot from SSI. They've done a great job managing their business, and their products speak for themselves. And in return, we can give them access to funding, as well as new technologies."

SSI had nothing but praise for the deal as well, especially the potential for more capital for product development. SSI President Joel Billings explained that "What Mindscape really affords us are the resources we'll need to bring our creative visions to life. As entertainment software has evolved, development efforts have become more and more complex. We believe that Mindscape is a strong partner, and can help us realize our plans."

Perhaps the most important aspect of the announcement for gamers is that the deal will have little affect on SSI's production schedule. That means gamers can still expect eagerly awaited titles such as *CyClones, Menzoberranzan, Panzer General, and Alien Logic: Skyrealms of Jorune* to arrive in mid to late November; *Renegade: The Battle for Jacob's Star* should hit store shelves in time for Christmas.

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Product Information Number 144

Three Men And a Buzzword

Big money, big names — but is it really a big deal for gamers?

"Multimedia" — already the buzz word of the decade — got a huge shot in the arm when it was announced that Steven Spielberg, Jeffery Katzenberg, and David Geffen plan to form a new movie studio and entertainment company. In addition to film, animation, music, and TV, the trio said it would also produce multimedia and interactive entertainment products.

What's most impressive about the announcement are the special talents each of the three brings to the company. In case you've been living in the proverbial cave, Spielberg was the director of *Jaws, Raiders of the Lost Ark, Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *Jurassic Park*, the largest grossing film of all time. With a track record like that, there's little chance that the trio will have trouble getting investors to empty their pockets to back the new company, though it's a safe bet that the three will put up some of their own capital to get things rolling.

Former Disney Studios Vice President Jeffrey Katzenberg, who left the company after a dispute with CEO Michael Eisner, was the driving force behind the revitalization of Disney's feature animations. And David Geffen, founder of Geffen Records, is renowned for picking up on the latest trends in music and bringing them to a broad audience.

Of course, developing software nowadays takes months and even years — and as we go to press the Spielberg-

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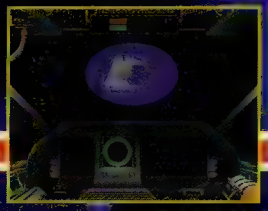
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BATTLE FOR JACOB'S STAR™

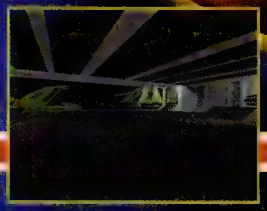
On CD-ROM for IBM & Compatibles

SO INTENSE YOU'LL HAVE TO CHANGE YOUR FLIGHT SUIT AFTER EVERY MISSION!

This is space combat at its very best — as only CD-ROM can deliver! FASA'S RENEGADE LEGION® INTERCEPTOR® game system comes alive with spectacular Super-VGA graphics, cinematics, digitized voices, music and sound effects. Just how hot does it look? The awesome artwork you see here is composed from actual game graphics! Once you dogfight in space *Renegade*-style, you'll know what it's like to really sweat bullets!









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Product Information Number 143

...Continued from page 40

Katzenberg-Geffen group hasn't even begun to bring the necessary talent onboard. It could be quite some time before we see any entertainment software from the new company, unless they simply acquire products being designed and developed out of house, traditional entertainment companies like Trimark and Paramount have already done in an effort to get on the "interactive entertainment" bandwagon.

The big question, however, is what type of interactive software will be produced by a company headed by three men who've made their fame and fortune producing traditional — i.e., passive — entertainment. There's a world of difference between the two, and knowing what works in one doesn't guarantee success in the other. At any rate, the partnership brings even more attention to the burgeoning interactive entertainment industry — and that in itself can only be good news for veteran publishers and developers.

Double Your Pleasure

Stac Electronics aims for the gaming market with *Multimedia Stacker 4.0*

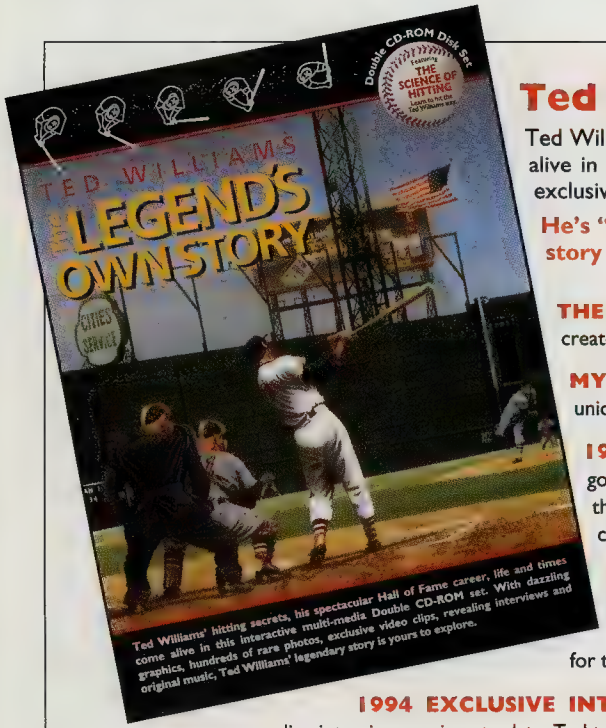
Hoping to capitalize on the growing popularity of multimedia systems — and solve the accompanying headaches of loading drivers for CD-ROM, sound cards, and disk-compression utilities while still retaining enough conventional memory to run high-end gaming software — Stac Electronics has just released *Multimedia Stacker 4.0* for Windows and DOS.

Multimedia Stacker uses Helix Software's Multimedia Cloaking technology, which provides the user with a "transparent" method of freeing conventional memory, assigning memory managers, and more without creating a boot disk or altering your CONFIG.SYS or AUTOEXEC.BAT files. Included in the package is a mouse driver that could many users up to 20K of RAM, enhanced CD-ROM extensions that can save users up to 30K of RAM, and a disk cache that can also save up to 30K.

Multimedia Stacker has been designed to address the needs of novice users as well as PC veterans; beginners can let *Stacker* diagnose their systems and implement configuration changes without the need of DOS knowledge, while a customizing feature will allow experienced users change various parameters to their liking.

The other and most obvious benefit of *Multimedia Stacker* is increased disk space. It's a rare floppy-based game that requires less than ten megabytes or hard-drive space, and some take up 30, 40, or even 50 megs (*Dark Sun: Wake of the Ravager* has an option to install 70MB on your hard drive!). And the fact that CD-ROM is now the delivery system of choice doesn't necessarily solve all your hard-drive space problems — many CD-ROM programs require you to copy several megabytes of portions of files copied to your hard-drive for optimum (sometimes merely acceptable) performance. This latest version of Stacker features a fairly well-tested method of data compression that breaks the 2:1 compression barrier, surpassing by far the DriveSpace utility that comes with the latest version (6.21) of MS-DOS.

Multimedia Stacker will ship on 3.5" disks and CD-ROM, and is compatible with MS-DOS 3.2 and higher, PC-DOS 3.2 and higher, Novell DOS 7, and Windows 3.0, 3.1, and Windows for Workgroups.



Ted Williams – The Legend's Own Story

Ted Williams' hitting secrets, his spectacular Hall of Fame career, life and times come alive in this double CD-ROM disk set. With dazzling graphics, hundreds of photos, exclusive video clips, revealing interviews and original music.

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1941 – In a career of spectacular achievements, 1941 was Ted's ultimate year. You've got a ticket to a full length docudrama at the local movie theater, or head over to the newsstand to check out the magazine and newspaper accounts of Ted's 1941 crowning achievement.

STATISTICS – Investigate Ted's lifetime achievements in both individual and career categories using unique turn-of-the-century "virtual" baseball cards. Statistics based on compilations including "what if" scenarios which re-rank Ted's accomplishments for the years Ted was away in Military Service.

1994 EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW – Ted reflects on his career in one of the most candid, colorful and revealing interview sessions to date. Ted talks about his passion for the game. It's Ted on Ted like you've never seen before.

DOUBLE CD-ROM DISK SET

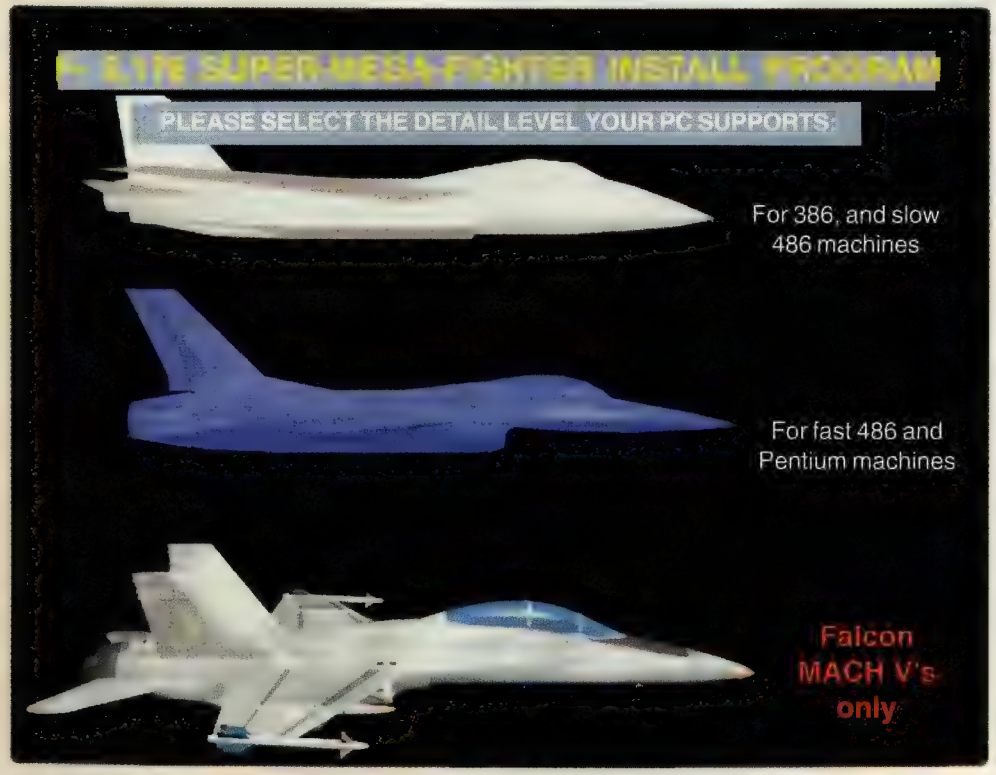
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Product Information Number 105

"If you want to go all out for games, the Falcon is the best bet for your money."
-Computer Gaming World



It's a cruel fact of computer gaming: better graphics demand more computer power. Smoother animation requires a higher frame-rate. Your eyes can see 30 frames every second. If your computer is doing anything less, your game won't play smoothly. And if you think today's games are demanding, just wait until you see tomorrow's!

The Falcon MACH V and MACH Vp are not your average computers. They were specifically designed with the needs of gamers in mind: extreme frame-rates, brutal amounts of CPU power, unreal hard disk transfer rates, and all of the multimedia and gaming extras that you'd normally have to add yourself. Sure, they're great for spreadsheets, word processing, and general business - any computer can do that. When you're ready for something more, you're ready for a MACH V.

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Featuring an AMD 486 DX/2-80™ CPU, 4 megabytes of RAM, and a 425 megabyte *Enhanced IDE* hard disk

The MACH Vp - $2,995

Featuring an Intel 90 MHz PENTIUM™ CPU, 8 megabytes of RAM, a 540 megabyte *Enhanced IDE* hard disk, and a SoundBlaster 16



Optional 15" monitor shown

Each MACH V system comes standard with our VESA Local Bus graphics and Enhanced IDE hard disk controllers, 1.2 & 1.4 megabyte floppy drives, mini-tower case, 101 key keyboard, 250ms double-speed CD-ROM, Creative Labs SoundBlaster PRO or 16™, Labtec multimedia speakers, CH Products FLIGHTSTICK PRO™ and dual high-speed joystick ports, licensed Microsoft DOS 6.22™ and Windows 3.11™, 3 button mouse, and a 14" non-interlaced full-screen SVGA monitor. Each MACH V is custom built - many different processor speeds and upgrades are available, please call for pricing and availability.

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Product Information Number 102

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Th-thump. Th-thump.
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"Truly innovative." Strategy Plus

You are totally focused.
On the smell.
Just the smell.
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Then you pounce.
Suddenly. Stealthily.
You break its neck.
You're hungry.
You are such an animal.



"It's addictive." PC Gamer



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A wolf.
And you experience all the sights,
sounds...and smells...firsthand.



Mating tips included.

That's what makes this game unlike
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It's realistic.
So realistic that it just might blow
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(Or maybe a predator will.)
Will you survive?
You'll have to hunt.
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The Rest of the Story

PC Gamer strategy recommendations for the upcoming holiday season.

You may have noticed that in our Buyer's Guide last issue, a few great strategy games were conspicuous by their absence. The reason? Well, we'd love to be able to blame it on the printer or some other third party, but the truth is that it was simply overlooked in our rush to get the issue out on time.

We briefly considered not mentioning our error, hoping that not *that* many people would notice, but quickly decided such a move would hardly be in our readers' best interests. So here are our recommendations for strategy games — a little late, but still in time for you last-minute Christmas shoppers (is there any other kind?).

X-COM (MicroProse)
This is one of the most popular games of any kind to debut all year long. You're in charge a team of U.N. commandos assigned the task of repelling a series of invasions by extraterrestrials. You have complete control of the team, from setting the budget and hiring scientific staff to maneuvering your individual soldiers in squad-level combat sequences. *X-COM* manages to integrate varied game styles to create a seamless whole that's very impressive indeed. It might not be the flashiest-looking game around, but don't let that fool you: *X-COM* proves that beauty isn't everything, and that substance still counts in PC gaming.

Ultimate Domain (Mindscape, formerly known as The Software Toolworks)
Ultimate Domain is a hybrid; it takes a little of everything that makes strategy games so much fun, and tosses the rest aside. You're a captain in charge of a group of followers, and you'll direct their efforts to develop new technologies, trades, and a civil infrastructure, at the same time carrying on a war for possession of your world. It looks a lot like *Populous*, but don't be fooled: *Ultimate Domain* offers a completely different strategic experience. The CD-ROM version features enhanced music and sound effects.

Master of Orion (MicroProse)
As good as this year has been to the strategy gamer, it's been even better to MicroProse. With *Master of Orion*, Microprose managed to sew up its reputation as one of the finest producers os strategy games around — a reputation based in part on such hits as *Civilization* and *Railroad Tycoon*. *Master of Orion* puts you in competition with alien races, all of whom are trying to conquer the others while expanding their galactic empires. It's strategy on a grand, sci-fi scale, and is already a classic of the genre.

Sim City 2000 (Maxis)
At its most basic level, *Sim City 2000* is an upgrade of the earlier *Sim City*; you build, and then manage, your own city. But Maxis has so thoroughly updated that classic, adding SVGA graphics, new sound effects, and more detailed control over your city and environment. It's one of those titles that's sure to please just about everyone.

Lords of the Realm (Impressions)
A historical strategy game, *Lords of the Realm* puts you in medieval England, and challenges you to manage your own county and build your wealth and resources — and ultimately, to unite the isle under your rule. This is an elegant, thoughtful game, and will appeal to any desktop historian.

Some More Sound Strategies

If your holiday gift recipient already has those titles, there are still more that're well worth considering. *Merchant Prince* from QQP, for instance, is a very good incarnation of the sea-trading premise: Buy goods, get 'em to port, and build your fortune. And for the multimedia fanatic, there's *The Horde* from Crystal Dynamics. This one'll please you with its smooth video cutaways and fast-paced action/strategy sequences. *Detroit* from Impressions is just the thing for the aspiring auto magnate; SSI's *Serf City: Life is Feudal* should win some kind of award for its title — and the gaming's not bad, either. When we recommended Sierra's *Outpost* we caught a lot of flak from gamers who thought it was too buggy and difficult, but we're gonna recommend it again. And for something *really* different, take a look at Eidolon's *Millenium Auction*. This multimedia extravaganza will wow you with its graphics, and keep your interest with its off-beat gameplay. And finally, the bridge-lover will be delighted with *Bridge Olympiad* from Great Game Products. It's one of the best bridge titles ever to hit the PC.

And Watch For...

We haven't reviewed them yet, but these titles hold some real promise, and will be available by the time those holidays roll around. First up is *Hammer of the Gods*, from New World Computing. Play as a Viking, doing that conquest thing the Vikings did so well. If you've read the feature on *Transport Tycoon*, you already know that we think this could be one of the best strategy and resource-management games of the year. Try the demo on either the *PC Gamer* demo floppy or CD-ROM — even with only transport type available, you'll see why we think this could be a real delight.

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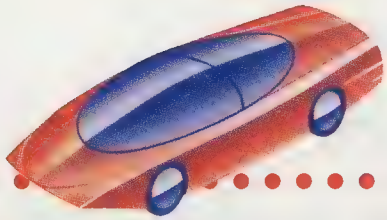
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Product Information Number 152



Planes, Trains, Automobiles, and Ships, too!



MicroProse's follow-up to the classic *Railroad Tycoon* gives you the opportunity to build a mighty transportation network from scratch — and you don't even need any startup capital.

T. Liam MacDonald

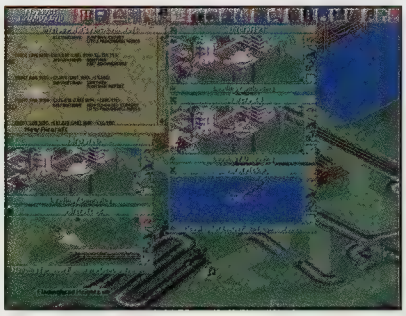
Transportation is the engine that drives civilization. If it were all to shut down tomorrow, entire countries would grind to a screeching halt. Economies would crash, our methods of defense and warfare would be thrown into the dark ages, our contact with the rest of the world would fade and ultimately vanish. Yet we take road, rail, air, and sea transport for granted, never quite realizing how much we depend on them for just about everything in our lives.

Even before there were machines of mass transport we travelled, using whatever means were available. As far back as 1400 B.C., the Egyptians used reed boats to trade with a place called Punt, now believed to be Madagascar. Phoenicians developed an intricate and closely guarded network of trade, getting products through overland routes and shipping them to all corners of the Mediterranean on sturdy ships. We can trace trade patterns among the natives of ancient America, as they moved beads and precious stones from Peru to Oklahoma.

The infrastructure of global transport has grown and become more refined, so that it now defines our lives — and our futures — more than it ever has. Steel ore must be moved from the mines to the factory for smelting, and then moved again to Detroit (or Mexico) to be turned into cars. From there the cars can be driven over roads to reach a dealership, or put on a car-carrying tractor trailer, or hauled by train. Maybe they're marked for export, in which case they'll be placed on a boat to cross the ocean. Maybe you'll wind up driving one to work every day, and have to clean up the oil it leaks in your driveway.



Get info on each of your planes, their status, profitability, remaining lifetime, and so on.



Change the location of all your various planes using this helpful menu.

How about food? It doesn't grow at the Piggly Wiggly you know — it has to be hauled by train and truck from the farms, passing through several hands and several modes of transportation on the way.

And people? We may not care much for airlines, but they've compressed into hours trips that used to take months.

Yet still we complain: the car you ordered hasn't arrived at the dealership yet, your train is 15 minutes late, you're scared to death of flying because the airline just lost a plane.

But what if *you* had power over all these diverse elements of transportation? What if the job of moving raw materials and finished products from sources to market were your responsibility? What if the delays on the trains people ride every day were your fault? What if you were blamed when a commercial airliner went down in flames?

Could you do any better?

It's time to find out.

Are You a Tycoon?

It began life at MicroProse U.K. as the *Interactive Transport Simulator*, but it's clear from looking at this game that it could only be called *Transport Tycoon*. For those who remember the landmark MicroProse title *Railroad Tycoon*, that says a lot — but one look at *Transport Tycoon*, and you can tell right away that it really doesn't say *enough*.

Designed by newcomer Chris Sawyer, *Transport Tycoon* is an unusual hybrid of *Railroad Tycoon* and *SimCity 2000*. Its SVGA graphics and oblique, 3D city-view are clearly inspired by *SimCity 2000*, with detailed buildings which change and age over time. The gameplay itself enlarges significantly the transportation element of *SimCity*, making it the prime focus of play. For each game, a random world is generated with unique terrain features — hills, rivers, open bodies of water, forests — as well as cities and towns in various stages of development. Throughout this world there are sundry industries and resources, and all of these elements—cities, raw materials, products, and so on — must be connected with an elaborate transportation network.

The game continually clicks off time in set increments, with about 20 minutes equaling one year of game time. The issue of what historical eras *Transport Tycoon* would cover was a tough one for the design team, as Chris Sawyer explains: "I felt that the game shouldn't span more than 100 years, and to allow the greatest variety of train and vehicle types, we decided on the period between 1930 and 2030. This gives the player about 30 years of working with steam trains, then diesel and electric trains, and finally futuristic monorails in the years beyond 2000."

Does this mean that the Great Age of Rail or the spaceships of the far future will never be part of the game? Maybe, but it's

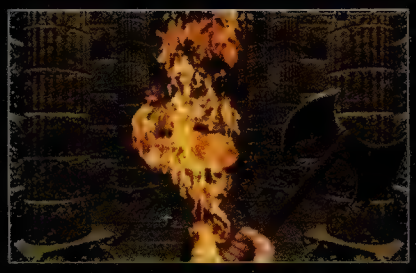


Use this window to modify the routes your trains take.

This one you won't want to miss.

It's been nearly three years in the making with a budget we won't even talk about. It employed a team of over a hundred people, including programmers, artists, musicians and writers as well as Hollywood make-up and special effects houses (we liked the flames in *Backdraft*™ so we hired the movie's special effects house to bring in a little heat). As the creators of *Wasteland*™ and *The Bard's Tale*™, our goal was to produce a game every bit as innovative and unique. We think you'll like the results.

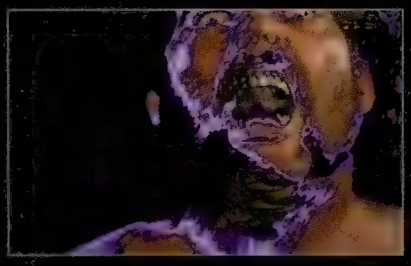




Art and Stuff
Graphically, the game is state-of-the-art stunning (we're a little biased but check out the screenshots for yourself). We used a combination of live actors and computer generated creatures with Silicon Graphics environments and magical effects which were painstakingly rendered down to the finest crack, doorway and magical lightning storm.

The Box, the Book and Story
The packaging is every bit as cool as the game. Shipping in a special tombstone-shaped, hologram box, the package starts you on your quest "through dark corridors, treacherous sewers and subterranean realms of faeries, magick and the living dead." (We had to throw a bit of marketing hype in here somewhere.) Along with the skeleton hologram cover, you also get a limited edition, hard-bound Stonekeep novella by Steve Jackson and David Pulver.





The Game's the Thing
A combination of traditional role playing and interactive storytelling, *Stonekeep* mixes a detailed storyline and character interaction with puzzle-solving, magic systems, character attributes and combat. It all comes together in a system that allows for quality storytelling combined with a powerful, yet easy-to-use control system (intuitive without being watered down).



Interplay™ "By Gamers. For Gamers."™ is Interplay's slogan and *Stonekeep* is the kind of game we've always wanted to play. It looks cool, sounds great and tells a good story. It's one of those games you'll stay up playing until three in the morning on a work night. Basically, it's just a lot of fun.



A CD-ROM, Role-Playing Experience for IBM and Compatibles.

STONEKEEP

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Profiles are easily accessed and give detailed information about each player and their company.

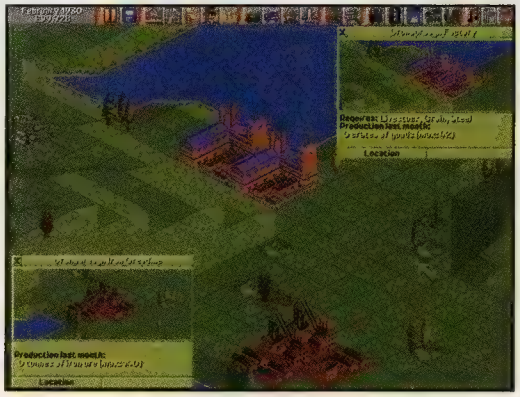
likely MicroProse will tackle these areas in future versions of the game or in add-on disks. Don't waste too much time worrying about that, though. Right now, you have a transportation empire to build.

Staking Your Claim

In the first game I played with the demo (featured on both the floppy-disk and CD-ROM editions of this issue), I found a small city called Drunborough nestled in the hills. On the outskirts of this city were a factory and an ore mine. The factory needed ore to make products, and the town needed products. So I began my empire very simply, building rail lines and stations connecting town, mine, and factory. Only one engine was available, so I bought it, and prepared it to carry ore and manufactured goods. Once the schedule of stops was set, the train went about its business. I had staked a claim on the transport needs of Drunborough, with a fairly small initial investment. And that's not a bad plan, according to Sawyer:

"For the first few years in a game, the player has to concentrate on making the best use of the limited money available. It's easy to start building what would be a very profitable railway line between two distant industries, only to find that the cash runs out just before it's completed. It's best to start small, building short railway lines or road services, and wait until more cash is available before planning longer routes."

In the finished game, you can begin by working with all four transport types in small increments (only trains are available in the demo). Each is subtly different, and some are better suited to particular tasks than others. The player can build railways, roads, airports, docks, and vehicles, determining where to place them, how to connect them, and what their jobs will be. Once set, vehicles will run on their own, and only need to be attended to if you want to change their composition or destination. While roadways and rail lines don't deteriorate as they can in *SimCity*, transport types *do*, and require regular servicing to keep them running. It's a fancy juggling act that becomes increasingly challenging as more types of transport vehicles become available to the player.



Connecting the factory and the ore mine in Drunborough is a simple way to acquire a steady flow of income.



You can even sneak a peek at your competitors' finances to see how your company compares.

Finding the Perfect Blend

With the passage of time, the needs of cities and the people inhabiting them will obviously change. Industry grows, new demands need to be met, and the transportation network serving the area has to grow to accommodate it. The infrastructure for this network has to be carefully planned from the beginning to allow for future expansion and to prevent tie-ups and snarls. Too many trains vying for the same lines without enough switching stations can spell disaster: And without the ability to grow, you'll be left out in the cold.

As people's needs change, you'll have to determine what each place requires most and, more importantly, what they'll pay to get it. If a lot of citizens want to trav-



Windows are available for nearly every function, from accessing an overhead map of the region, reviewing your personal finances, checking the latest news stories, and much more.

Pizza Tycoon

Talk about weirdness. When MicroProse said they were doing a title called *Pizza Tycoon*, I thought it was a gag. It's not.

MicroProse's newest import from Europe (it was originally called *Pizza Connection* — wonder if they changed it because of that heroin smuggling case a few years back?) looks to be a tongue-in-cheek take on "Tycoon"-type games: a business sim laced with humorous touches. At the start of the game, you choose a character and then use the wad of cash you've been given to build a pizza parlor in the city of your choice. With the remaining money, you hire waiters and chefs, plan an advertising campaign, design a menu, and furnish your new restaurant.

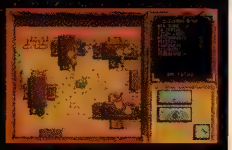
Along the way you'll have to deal with various problems, such as visits by the local authorities and, quite probably, the Mafia. Then there are business decisions: Which chef should you hire? What gimmicks can you think of to attract customers? What dirty tricks can you play to thwart the competition? And you won't stand much chance of success if you don't do something to make your joint stand out from the crowd. Do you aim for a smaller but wealthier clientele by offering lobster or seaweed on your pie, or do you go for a more traditional menu? Heck, you can even choose what kind of furniture to place in the restaurant: contemporary, cheap, fancy, and so on.

Pizza Tycoon can be played in two ways. In "free" mode, you have complete control over your business, while "mission" mode requires you to accomplish certain goals to win. The "free" game can last as long as you wish, with the only limits being the death of your character. Each character, and there are 100 planned for the game, has different ratings in attributes such as wealth, dexterity, culinary skills, popularity, age, health, and so on, and these can either grow or diminish as the game proceeds.

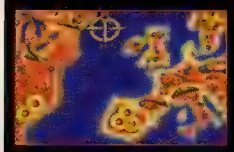
From the pics I've seen, it looks like this could be a light, fun game for a wider audience than, say, *Detroit*. And after hearing about it, I realized that the possibilities for Tycoon, like with the Sim games, are endless. My pick is *Fertilizer Tycoon*, in which you have to be the first person to make a million selling dung.



Deal with dangerous criminal types as you try to keep your first restaurant afloat.



A bird's eye view of your new pizza parlor.



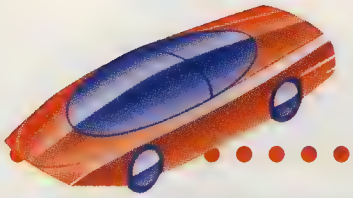
A map of the known pizza world



What the experts think of your pie — not much! Do these guys look like refugees from MAD Magazine?



Here, in all his youthful genius, is Chris Sawyer — the designer of *Transport Tycoon*. Not quite the gruff, business-type guy you'd expect to find behind such an ambitious economic sim, is he?

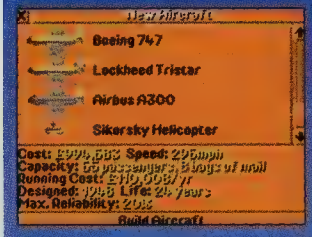


Decisions, Decisions!

When choosing the type of transportation you'll use to serve an area, you must balance reliability, cost, efficiency, and all the other aspects of each vehicle to determine which is best for your needs. Sometimes this only comes with trial and error, but a quick look at the specs for each transportation type can tell a lot. We've culled a few of each type from a game as it existed up until 1981. Each comes with several different gauges of quality.

Base/Yearly Cost This reflects the initial purchase cost of each vehicle, and the amount it will cost you each year to keep this type in service. (Note: I selected British Pounds for the game these figures were taken from.)
Speed (MPH) The top speed of this type of vehicle.
Capacity What it can carry (people, coal, mail, etc.), and its maximum payload.
Lifespan (Years) How long before it will need to be replaced.
Reliability This percentage represents how often you can expect this vehicle to be late, break down, or fail to successfully accomplish its mission. A 75%, for instance, means that you can expect some type of problem once every four trips.

AIR



SHIPS



TRUCKS



TRAIN LOCOMOTIVES



Name (Year Designed)	Base/Yrly Cost	Speed (MPH)	Capacity	Lifespan (Years)	Reliability
Sikorsky Helicopter (1958)	952,596/89,105	200	40 passengers	20	75%
Airbus A300 (1972)	1,289,258/258,519	592	225 passengers	24	96%
BAC Aeropastiale Concorde (1969)	1,636,414/275,020	1,448	110 passengers	25	92%
Boeing 747 (1968)	1,411,808/278,320	592	250 passengers	25	76%
Passenger Ferry (1927)	572,058/57,752	20	100 passengers	30	70%
Hovercraft (1968)	881,922/121,922	70	100 passengers	25	87%
Coal-Carrying (1928)	762,744/77,003	15	200 tons coal	30	64%
Mail Ship (1925)	572,058/57,752	20	100 bags mail	30	50%
BR "8P" Steam (1954)	605,055/83,420	95	1800 hp	23	53%
EE "37" Diesel (1960)	550,050/71,497	90	1750 hp	20	80%
BR "86" Electric (1965)	660,060/94,003	100	3600 hp	23	80%
Brel "56" Diesel (1976)	623,990/101,288	80	3300 hp	20	99%
Bedford Coal (1925)	138,607/16,498	30	20 tons coal	15	66%
Leyland Leopard (1964)	179,676/21,630	60	35 passengers	15	85%
Volvo Oil (1975)	179,676/23,464	70	25 tons oil	15	99%
Ford Armored Car (1975)	218,179/23,464	70	15 bags of valuables	15	77%



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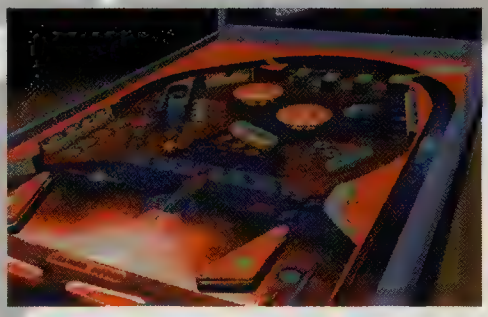
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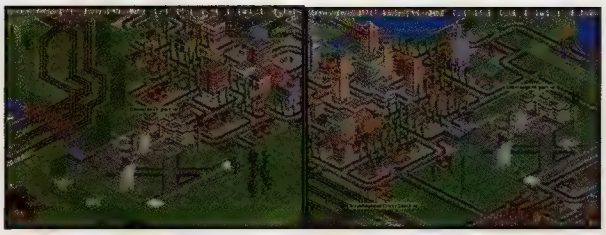
- *Terrific table designs with all the features of a real table - flippers, ramps, passages, tunnels, mushroom bumpers, ball traps, drop targets, roll overs, lights, switches, bonuses and jackpots.*
- *Totally realistic ball movement*
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Airplanes wait by the tarmac and taxi up the runway.

el long distances in as short a time as possible, it's time to build airports. It's a balancing act which must be perfected for victory. "The most successful company," Sawyer acknowledges, "will probably be the one which uses all four transport types most effectively. Each transport type has its advantages and disadvantages, and it's up to the players to find a good balance between the different transport types. Since a different game world is generated randomly at the start of each new game, the suitability of the different transport types varies from game to game.



This huge station links Dondson to the rest of the world.

"Each transport has its pros and cons," Sawyer says. "Aircraft can carry passengers fast between distant towns, ships can carry large amounts of heavy cargo, road vehicles are initially cheap to set up, and trains are flexible and can be used for most situations. Passengers aren't necessarily interested in the type of transports, but they do take notice of the speed, frequency, and reliability of the service — a fast, regular, and reliable service will always attract more custom than a slow, irregular, unreliable service."

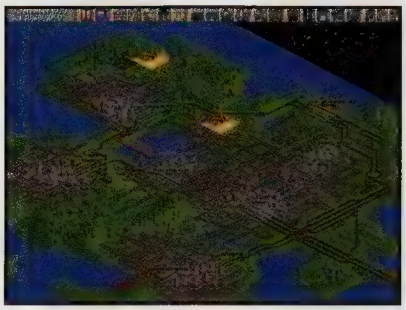
To keep up, equipment must be constantly upgraded. Manufacturers will offer prototypes of new designs, and you can build these and try them out. Each vehicle design has a unique reliability profile, and works differently in terms of speed, efficiency, and other criteria. As the game proceeds, more and more new locomotives, trucks, ships, and aircraft become available. Sometimes, prototype vehicles will be made available to the player *before* they hit the marketplace, giving him a substantial edge. The catch? Prototype vehicles can be notoriously unreliable, breaking down or even crashing, reducing profitability and customer confidence in your company. If that happens, the competition can move in for the kill.

You're Not Alone, Mister

You didn't think you were the only entrepreneur trying to turn your small-time transportation network into an empire, did you? Of course not! MicroProse UK has pumped a considerable amount of time and effort into creating a huge selection of cutthroat competitors. Each time you begin a new game, the computer generates a unique set of three competing companies. Led by distinct characters with their own styles, these companies develop and grow over time, some choosing to specialize in specific cargos or transport types. Some are just getting by, while others are just eager to kill you.

Making challenging artificial opponents was a central goal for Sawyer: "This was probably the most difficult part of the game to program. I spent many hours playing the game to find out what strategies are effective for the human player, and then I had to design algorithms for the program to simulate these strategies for competing companies."

Transport Tycoon does more than just give you some stiff business competition, however. All players, human or artificial, are capable of playing dirty tricks on the others. You can pay to have someone's gold shipment robbed, or fund the reconstruction of a city's road network in order to wreak havoc with another company's roadway services. There's a truckload of these dirty tricks, each carrying the risk of discovery and a subsequent loss in player stature.



Various zoom levels make surveying your empire a breeze.

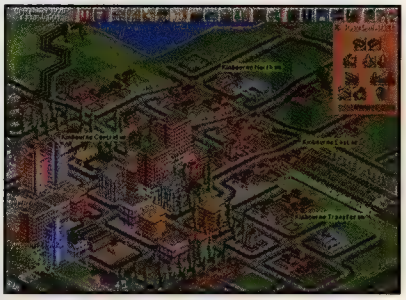
Not only are other companies hindering your growth, but town councils are as well. They're real sticklers about rezoning, and will often stand in the way of expansion. A quick way around it? *Transport Tycoon* allows you to bribe city officials to let you build where you please (wow — talk about realism!). And as if all that weren't enough, you also have to worry about various disasters (Sawyer is being coy about just what kind) destroying your systems.



Even with just a simple road network, Invenly seems to be growing nicely.

Everything You Asked For

Cutthroat competitors! Dirty tricks! Snooty town councils! Bribing government officials! Natural disasters! Heck, there's even serial-port head-to-head play!



Use the Road Construct tool to lay or remove road, or build tunnels, bridges or depots. You can even raise or lower the land.

It's everything you could ever have wanted in a game of this type. Every kind of air, water, and ground transport from the 1930s until a hypothetical future of monorails and matter transport is here for you to tinker with. Take chances on new vehicle types, destroy the competition, and build elaborate networks and routes to shuttle people and things from place to place. What more could you ask for?

Did you ever plan an entire *SimCity* around a transportation network? Knock down buildings to make an overpass or lay a highway? Well, that was kid's stuff compared to this. *Transport Tycoon* makes you Aristotle Onasis, Howard Hughes, Cornelius Vanderbilt and, um, er, Jimmy Hoffa all wrapped up in one.

From the looks of it, MicroProse has another classic on its hands, with just the right combination of great graphics, simple interface, strong competition, and open-ended design to addict people as much as *Railroad Tycoon* did.

PCG

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"Other games will come and go, but you'll be playing Lords of Midnight all year!"—Computer Player

"The scope of Lords of Midnight is incredible and it's all too easy to get completely caught up in it."
—Interactive Entertainment

"A spine-tingling plot, combined with the latest in 3D technology, is an explosive combination in Lords."
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Product Information Number 100

PC GAMER'S READERS' TOP 40

Don't Blame Us — We Just Compiled 'Em!

We knew when we ran our *Top 40 Best Games of All Time* in the August issue, it just might raise the ire of a few of our readers. As it turns out, we raised nearly *everyone*'s ire. Almost from the day that issue hit the newsstand (or mailbox), we've been flooded with letters, phone calls, and faxes. Readers on the Internet, CompuServe, America Online, and other online services took potshots at us, saying we had a lot of nerve running such a list in only our third issue, obviously unaware that all the *PC Gamer* editors worked on the five-year-old *PC Entertainment*, and have been playing games even longer than that.

While we're glad our readers have such strong, vocal, and usually justifiable opinions, we're still standing by *our* Top 40 list (or at least the vast majority of it). But, just as we promised when we published the list, we've compiled all of your lists to create the *PC Gamer Readers' Top 40 Games of All Time*. So, without further adieu, here are *your* choices. And by the way — does this mean we get to start insulting *you*?

40

V for Victory: Utah Beach

(Three-Sixty Pacific)

(*PCG* Ranking: 14)

We're glad to see that enough readers have enjoyed this wonderful series of military simulations to warrant the appearance of the debut title here. Atomic Games' talent for designing accurate, challenging, and attractive sims was certainly showcased in *V for Victory: Utah Beach*. It clearly won the battle for the hearts of wargaming veterans and novices alike.

39

Star Control II

(Accolade)

(*PCG* Ranking: 21)

There have been plenty of save-the-Earth-by-heading-into space storylines in computer games, but few have the fun and depth of gameplay of *Star Control II*. The sheer scope of this game had us playing for weeks when it first came out, and it *still* hasn't worn out its welcome.

38

Ultima VII: The Black Gate

Origin Systems

(*PCG* Ranking: N/A)

Ultima VII saw Ultima creator Richard Garriott introduce an interface and graphics that were considerably improved over those in *Ultima VI*; combined with an excellent story, they helped usher in a new legion of Ultima fans. If you haven't played it yet, check out Origin's *Ultima VII CD-ROM*. This outstanding value includes *Ultima VII: The Black Gate, Ultima VII Part II: Serpent Isle*, and two add-on disks, *Forge of Virtue* and *Silver Seed*.

37

Commanche: Maximum Overkill

(NovaLogic)

(*PCG* Ranking: N/A)

This breakthrough title from NovaLogic brought some much- needed excitement to the often neglected realm of helicopter sims, boasting the most convincing ground graphics ever seen in any type of simulation. Realism freaks may have groaned at how forgiving the game was when it came to how much damage your 'copter could take, but there's no denying that *Comanche* provided a lot of fast-paced action.

36

Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Father

(Sierra On-Line)

(*PCG* Ranking: N/A)

The first in what will hopefully be a new adventure cycle lets you delve into some mysterious happenings down in New Orleans. Full voice-acting on the CD-ROM version and some of Sierra's best graphics work will propel you to some truly frightening discoveries. Adventuring of the first order, with a dash of Creole flair.

35

King's Quest V
(Sierra On-Line)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

Several games from the King's Quest series were mentioned by readers, but this particular installment was the overwhelming favorite. Its combination of challenging gameplay and old-fashioned charm and wit has earned it a special place in the hearts of thousands of King's Quest fans.

34

Pinball Fantasies
(21st Century Entertainment)

(PCG Ranking: 33)

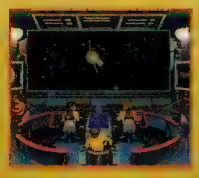
If you ever find yourself longing for the days of misspent youth playing the ol' silver ball, load *Pinball Fantasies* onto your PC. Four tables, eight-player capability, razor-sharp graphics, and incredible music and sound effects make this one easily the best PC pinball game ever.

33

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary Edition
(Interplay)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

When this game was first released, Trekkies everywhere feared it would simply be an exploitation of the 60's TV show — but it was surprisingly faithful to the spirit of Kirk, Spock, Bones, Sulu, Checkov, and all your other friends from the *Enterprise.* If you love the show, you'll love the game.



32

Rebel Assault
(LucasArts)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

While *Rebel Assault* didn't find many fans among our editors because of the limited control it offered the player, our readers were more forgiving. Full-motion video, digitized speech, and music score from the *Star Wars* films helped make this game one of the best-selling CD-ROMs of all time.

31

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe
(LucasArts)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

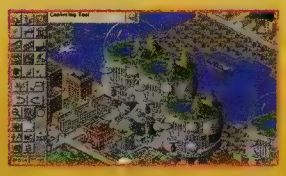
Designed by *X-Wing* creator Lawrence Holland, *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* was the third and most elaborate LucasArts effort at re-creating the air war of World War II. This is a fine simulator featuring a broad array of craft, and also includes a strategic game that lets you make the big decisions about how the air war is conducted. The CD-ROM *Air Combat Classics* features *SWOTL*, as well as *Their Finest Hour: Battle of Britain* and *Battlehawks 1942.*

30

SimCity
(Maxis)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

Who would have guessed that gamers would actually *enjoy* the trials and tribulations of managing the problems of a growing metropolis? Thankfully, Maxis founder Will Wright had the vision to forge ahead with that unique concept — and the result was PC history. We like *SimCity 2000* better, though.



29

TIE Fighter
(LucasArts)

(PCG Ranking: Not yet released when list was compiled)

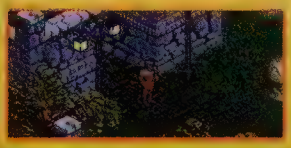
TIE Fighter will certainly be on our list as one of the best games ever, so it came as no surprise when it began appearing as a candidate on our *Readers Top 40.* The improved graphics, six fighter craft, and sinister plot apparently appealed to our dark side (it was *PC Gamer*'s highest rated game ever!) and the addition of primary and secondary objectives gave those who found *X-Wing*'s mission requirements too tough, plenty to cheer about.

28

Ultima VIII: Pagan
(Origin Systems)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

This surprised us a little, since the hefty hardware requirements and new interface made some of the memory problems of *Ultima VII* seem minor. But if you have the system to run it smoothly, *Ultima VIII* is a visual treat — the 3/4 perspective allowed Origin to include some terrific animations for the inhabitants of the isle of Pagan. We're still not happy about the lack of character creation, though.



27

The Bard's Tale
(Electronic Arts)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

As the oldest game on this list (1985), *The Bard's Tale* was often a gamer's first transition from text-only to what could now be considered a classic roleplaying interface. Though it started a limited series, none of its sequels featured the caliber of writing that's the hallmark of this classic. If you can find it, buy it — but don't expect much in the way of graphics.

26

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat
(Electronic Arts)

(PCG Ranking: 9)

Chuck Yeager has had a pretty interesting life — test pilot, first man to break the sound barrier, Brigadier General (ret) — and, in 1991, computer game consultant. *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* does a little bit of everything well, letting you fly dozens of historic missions as well as mix planes from different eras for new challenges. We'll be playing this one when it's time to do the next list.

25

Myst
(Broderbund)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

If ever there was a game you'd show to non-gamers as proof of how well PCs can do graphics, this is it. Although designed on and for Macs, the PC version is every bit as good. Highly challenging puzzles give plenty of gameplay for adventurers looking to explore a truly unique game environment. In fact, it may be a little *too* tough in some places.

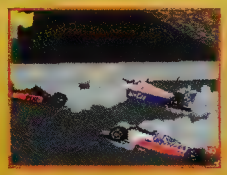


24

IndyCar Racing
(Papyrus)

(PCG Ranking: 20)

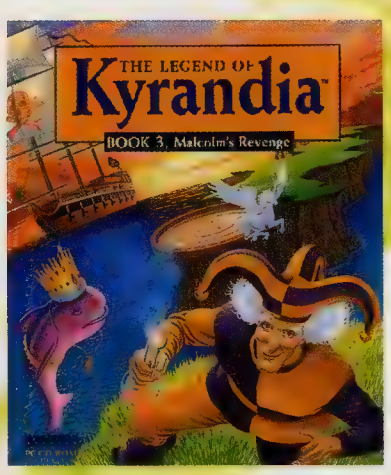
You don't have to like racing, know anything about cars, or even have a driver's license to appreciate this game. Great sounds and graphics — and a hell of a lot of high-speed action — made *IndyCar Racing* an instant classic, while breaking some myths about the level of realism racing sims could attain. This is the definitive racing game — at least until



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FEATURES

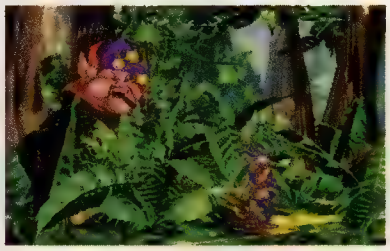
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- WITH OUR "NO-CLICK" INTERFACING, assess options by simply moving your mouse to the lower screen. The action's faster and the graphics are bigger.
- ALTHOUGH MALCOLM'S WARPED, our new *Supersound* is exceptionally clear. Along with lively music, you'll hear real Kyrandian sound effects.

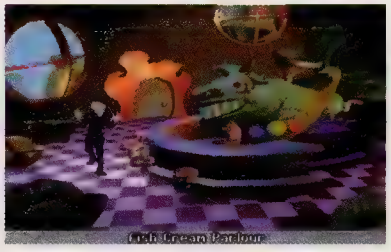








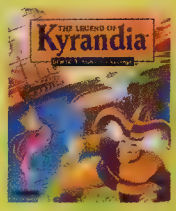




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Product Information Number 154

23

Sam and Max Hit the Road

(LucasArts)

(PCG Ranking: 8)

A common complaint about adventure games that try to be funny is that they never are. But *Sam and Max Hit the Road* — especially the CD-ROM version — proved that it could be done, and done well. Controlling a cartoon dog named Sam and a hyperkinetic rabbity thing named Max, you get the chance to meet Bigfoots (Bigfeet?) go to Snucky's, and even get a little detective work done. A genuinely funny — and fun — game.

22

Secret of Monkey Island

(LucasArts)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

The *Secret of Monkey Island* was one of LucasArts early —and greatest — successes. Making use of the now-classic LucasArts interface, *Monkey Island* mixes an enjoyable storyline, difficult puzzles, and good graphics (for the day) with a liberal sprinkling of humor, making this game well worth a position in any Top 40 list.

21

Syndicate

(Electronic Arts)

(PCG Ranking: 16)

Set in a dreary future in which the world is run by several megacorporations, *Syndicate* puts you in control of a squad of cybernetically enhanced agents whose mission is to make rival company's regions your own. It's dangerous, bloody work, but someone's gotta do it, right? Truly addictive, with plenty of pyrotechnics.

20

Railroad Tycoon

(MicroProse)

(PCG Ranking: 4)

Over a century ago, men of vision saw the need to modernize America through mass transit. While the means they employed were questionable, we all benefited from their actions — and got a great game out of it to boot. *Railroad Tycoon* lets you find out if you're cutthroat enough to build and maintain a rail system, while making a tidy profit. A classic.

19

Falcon 3.0 [Falcon Gold]

(Spectrum Holobyte)

(PCG Ranking: 15)

It's hard to imagine *any* Top 40 list that doesn't include *Falcon 3.0*. Even though many of the early releases had a variety of problems, the realism kept loyal fans playing until the next wave of patch disks or upgrades arrived. Add-on packages and modem support keep this game a favorite among PC jet jocks.

18

Lemmings

(Psygnosis)

(PCG Ranking: 30)

This was the first ever glimpse at these silly little critters, and it's one that's hard to forget. Trying to get those cute Lemmings to do *anything* can be tough, and if you don't use your limited tools properly, you may have the deaths of 50 of the buggers on your conscience. This one scores big points for originality and gameplay.

17

Betrayal at Krondor

(Dynamix)

(PCG Ranking: 31)

Roleplaying games sometimes lack the rich dialogue or settings of the books on which they're often based, so Dynamix set out to fix that by turning to Raymond E. Feist, renowned fantasy author. As a result, *Betrayal at Krondor* features the richest, most-developed fantasy world ever. A true delight for roleplayers.



16

The 7th Guest

(Virgin Interactive)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

It's going on two years since it was released, but *The 7th Guest* is still going strong. Though gameplay is mostly a matter of solving puzzles in order to be shown more of the story, the graphics and music here — as well as big numbers at the checkout counter — led many publishers to forego floppy development and move straight to CD-ROM.

15

Ultima Underworld II: Labyrinth of Worlds

(Origin)

(PCG Ranking: 27)

After defeating the wizard Tyball and the Slasher of Veils, the Avatar returns to Britannia and to save Lord British from the Guardian. *Underworld II* features substantial improvements over its precursor, with additional sounds, a larger viewing window, and enhanced graphics. One of the best dungeon crawls ever.

14

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis

(LucasArts)

(PCG Ranking: 38)

If it weren't for those damn Nazis, Indy would be a peace-loving archaeologist — but in *The Fate of Atlantis* the Nazis are as plentiful as in any Berlin pub, putting Indy smack in the middle of Hitler's quest to find the fabled city of Atlantis. As with most LucasArts games, the CD-ROM features some excellent voice acting.

13

Links 386 Pro

(Access)

(PCG Ranking: 6)

While nothing can replace the splendor of a real golf course, *Links 386 Pro* goes a long way in recreating that beauty — and challenge. This is still the most realistic golf game around, and a huge variety of add-on disks lets you play the world's greatest courses. A must for any PC sports fan.



12

Day of the Tentacle

(LucasArts)

(PCG Ranking: 46)

Day of the Tentacle showed just how far computer gaming has come in the few years since the release of its predecessor, *Maniac Mansion* — the animations and colorful backdrops in *DOTT* were favorably compared to classic Looney Toons, and LucasArts even included *Maniac Mansion* inside *DOTT*. As usual, the CD-ROM features great voice acting (including the voice of Les Nessman from "WKRP in Cincinnati").

11

Dune II

(Virgin Interactive)

(PCG Ranking: 49)

Since it didn't quite make the cut for our Top 40 list we're glad to see *Dune II* get some well-deserved recognition here. Based on the *Dune* book series and the sci-fi cult film *Dune*, this strategy game incorporated the elements of those very involved storylines with great graphics and a smooth interface. It all adds up to a classic game.

10

Front Page Sports: Football Pro

(Dynamix)

(PCG Ranking: 19)

With *Front Page Sports:Football Pro* Dynamix seemed to have picked just the right blend of control, options, graphics , and realism to send all those armchair quarterbacks running for the chance to coach and play with all the teams of the NFL. And drafting and trading options let you run things in the front office, too.

9

Aces Over Europe

(Dynamix)

(PCG Ranking: 12)

After making some substantial improvements over the graphics and flight models in *Aces of the Pacific*, Dynamix chose not to mess with the time-tested array of user-definable features that made that game (and *Red Baron*) so great. We like *Aces of the Pacific* a little better, but there's no denying this is one fantastic air-combat sim.

8

Red Baron

(Dynamix)

(PCG Ranking: 17)

Red Baron was released at the same time as *The Blue Max* and *Knights of the Sky* — and quickly proved itself the best of these three WWI flight sims. Though *RB*'s graphics show their age, its Career modes, historical missions, astounding variety of aircraft, and add-on Mission Builder make it the best WWI air-combat game ever — at least until it's challenged by *Dawn Patrol* and Origin's *Wings of Glory*.

7

Return to Zork

(Activision)

(PCG Ranking: 26)

The Zork text adventures are as revered as PC games can be, so when *Return to Zork* was released with its high-end graphics, full-motion video, and voice acting, veteran gamers were a little nervous. But *RTZ* featured the same brain-teasing puzzles and outstanding writing of those earlier games, giving new players an unexpected visual treat, and older gamers the challenge they longed for.



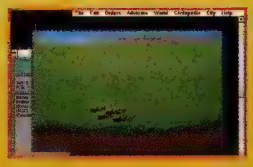
6

Civilization

(MicroProse)

(PCG Ranking: 2)

Taking a page from the *SimCity* book and rewriting it to encompass the evolution of society was part of what Sid Meier had in mind when he created *Civilization* — and gamers will forever be in his debt. The level of control and depth of gameplay propelled *Civilization* well beyond simple strategy to new heights of gaming. An all-time favorite.



5

Alone in the Dark

(I•Motion)

(PCG Ranking: 10)

With its innovative multiple perspectives and creepy atmosphere, nearly anyone who saw this game fell under its spell. Inspired by the writings of H.P. Lovecraft, *Alone in the Dark* merged horror, adventure gaming, and some good old-fashioned action into a wonderfully blood-curdling mix. Try it — if you dare.



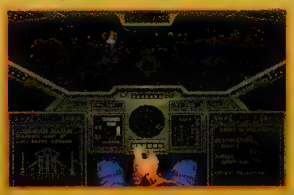
4

Wing Commander

(Origin)

(PCG Ranking: 23)

When it earned the #23 spot in *our* Top 40, some of the mail we received stated we must have been insane to give it anything lower than number five. Even with the excellent new *Wing Commander III* looming large over this Christmas season, new gamers shouldn't abandon the first installment in this space-combat series.



3

Wolfenstein 3-D

(id Software)

(PCG Ranking: N/A)

This is the shareware phenomenon that helped launch id, as well as the current 3D action-game craze. Nazis, guard dogs, and some neat end-level bosses in a WWII castle motif were more than enough to satisfy our desires for some thrilling first-person carnage. Still a lot of fun, even with that other id game available.

2

X-Wing

(LucasArts)

(PCG Ranking: 5)

Nearly anyone who was a kid back in the 70s when *Star Wars* hit theaters could imagine him/herself piloting the infamous X-Wing starfighter against Imperial TIE fighters — and judging by the incredible success of *X-Wing*, a lot of those kid are now grown-ups fulfilling that fantasy on their PCs. One of the most "realistic" space-combat simulators we've played, *X-Wing* also features a great musical score and glorious cut-scene graphics. Bravo!

1

Doom

(id Software)

(PCG Ranking: 1)

Surprise, surprise! We didn't doubt for a second that you loved *Doom* the way we loved *Doom*, and we're glad that it's finally in black and white, putting those very vocal naysayers in their place. Frankly, we're a little suspicious of anyone who doesn't love *Doom*; after all, what kind of sicko doesn't love blasting former humans and friends with a carelessly discarded sawed-off shotgun, or grabbing a berserker pack and pounding a demon into a bloody pulp? Buy it; play it; live it; love it.

PCG



DOS FOR GAMERS:

Memory Management Made Easy

by Tim Victor

DOS memory management can be confusing and frustrating, or it can be an enjoyable intellectual challenge. It all depends on your state of mind. Don't think of configuring your PC's memory as a chore, think of it as a type of computer game. There are puzzles to solve, trade-offs to be made, an arcane language to decode (hexadecimal arithmetic), and a rich payoff for succeeding — the knowledge that your computer will have enough free memory to run any program you might encounter.

Like so many things in life, confidence is the key — and confidence comes from knowing enough about the problem to believe that you can solve it. You have to understand what memory is. You have to be familiar with EMM386.EXE, the driver that creates upper memory blocks (UMBs), and with the DEVICEHIGH and LOADHIGH commands which load drivers and resident programs into these regions of usable memory outside the normal DOS area. But once you have them down, mastering DOS memory management is really just a matter of practice and experience.

OK, But What *is* Memory?

I could literally write one hundred pages on the subject, but that idea was vetoed. So here's the quick-and-dirty version.

First off, memory is *not* hard-drive space. Hard drives are for storage; think of them as filing cabinets. Memory, or RAM, is used by your computer to temporarily keep files and programming code open, so that your computer doesn't have to search for it on the hard drive and use it a little bit at a time. So memory is like a table top, where you can spread out the contents of a file (which you get from that hard-drive filing cabinet) and work on them all at once. The more memory you have, the bigger your table top and the more files you can spread out and work on at once. If you don't have enough memory, it'd be like reading a 100-page report by going to the file cabinet, taking one page, laying it on your table and reading it, then walking back to the cabinet, refiling that page and taking the next one... you get the idea.

Of course, it's not quite that easy; there are different *kinds* of memory, too. But explaining all that would take forever, so once again, here's a condensed explanation. The most important thing to remember is that your computer doesn't look at all of its available RAM in the same way. The memory up to 640K is called conventional, or base, memory — this is the area programs are referring to when they say "not enough memory," meaning that you don't have enough free base RAM to load the program. The memory between 640K and 1MB is upper memory, and this is where you should be able to stuff all those device drivers and Terminate and Stay Resident (TSR) programs that use up your base memory. And then there's the rest of your memory, the stuff above 1MB — and it can be configured as Expanded memory (EMS) or Extended memory (XMS), or a little of each. If you aren't loading an expanded memory manager like DOS's EMM386-.EXE in your CONFIG.SYS, you'll have XMS by default.

What follows, then, is intended to help you free up that all-important base memory, so you can get your games up and running. Memory management is pretty technical stuff, so keep your DOS manual handy to check out any terms you might not be familiar with.

You Gotta Start Somewhere

Take a look at my PC's setup. Like anyone's, it needs a collection of drivers and TSRs to run. Right now, I'm not loading any of those TSRs high (above the 640K limit), but I am telling EMM386 — DOS' memory manager — to be very aggressive about creating upper-memory blocks (UMBs). UMBs are the segments of upper memory where I'll eventually load those TSRs. EMM386's NOEMS keyword creates UMBs but turns off support for EMS memory emulation (we'll get to that in a minute) and the HIGHSCAN keyword replaces unused areas of ROM with

Notepad - AUTOEXEC.BAT

File Edit Search Help

```
C:\ADDSTOR\SSTOR D: /M=C:\ADDSTOR\SUPERSTR.DRV
C:\DOS6\MSCDEX.EXE /D:MSCD001 /M:10
C:\DOS6\SMARTDRV.EXE
PATH C:\DOS6;D:\BIN;C:\WIN31;C:\QEMM;C:\ADDSTOR;C:\NU;D:\PCTOOLS
SET TEMP=C:\WIN31\TEMP
SET TMP=C:\WIN31\TEMP
SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D3 H5 T4
```

Notepad - CONFIG.SYS

File Edit Search Help

```
DOS=HIGH,UMB
DEVICE=C:\DOS6\HIMEM.SYS
DEVICE=C:\DOS6\EMM386.EXE NOEMS HIGHSCAN I=B000-B7FF
DEVICE=C:\ADDSTOR\SSTORDRV.SYS /MAXMOUNT=1 /NOAUTO
DEVICE=C:\CDROM\NTMCDE.SYS /D:MSCD001 /P:300 /A:0 /M:64 /T:S /I:11
DEVICE=C:\WIN31\MOUSE.SYS
DEVICE=C:\REELMAGC\RMDEV.SYS
```

Above: The CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC-.BAT files, before we do any memory management.

```
Modules using memory below 1 MB:

  Name           Total          =   Conventional   +   Upper Memory
  --------  ----------------      ----------------    ----------------
  MSDOS       13,053   (13K)        13,053   (13K)          0    (0K)
  HIMEM        1,168    (1K)         1,168    (1K)          0    (0K)
  EMM386       3,120    (3K)         3,120    (3K)          0    (0K)
  SSTORDRV    29,328   (29K)        29,328   (29K)          0    (0K)
  NTMCDE      20,800   (20K)        20,800   (20K)          0    (0K)
  MOUSE       17,088   (17K)        17,088   (17K)          0    (0K)
  RMDEV        2,352    (2K)         2,352    (2K)          0    (0K)
  COMMAND      2,928    (3K)         2,928    (3K)          0    (0K)
  MSCDEX      36,224   (35K)        36,224   (35K)          0    (0K)
  MSDOS       18,208   (18K)             0    (0K)     18,208   (18K)
  SMARTDRV    30,368   (30K)             0    (0K)     30,368   (30K)
  Free       704,640  (688K)       529,168  (517K)    175,472  (171K)

Memory Summary:

  Type of Memory       Total   =    Used    +    Free
  ----------------  ----------    ----------  ----------
  Conventional         655,360      126,192     529,168
  Upper                224,048       48,576     175,472
  Reserved             131,072      131,072           0
  Extended (XMS)     7,378,128    2,454,736   4,923,392
  ----------------  ----------    ----------  ----------
  Total memory       8,388,608    2,760,576   5,628,032

  Total under 1 MB     879,408      174,768     704,640

  Largest executable program size        528,976   (517K)
  Largest free upper memory block        166,224   (162K)
  MS-DOS is resident in the high memory area.
```

Left: Type MEM/C at the DOS prompt to get this full report on memory usage. Now, I only have 517K free base RAM.

Below: MEM/F creates very important UMB report.

```
Free Conventional Memory:

  Segment        Total
  -------   ----------------
   015D8            80    (0K)
   015EE            96    (0K)
   01ECC           208    (0K)
   01ED9        88,992   (87K)
   03493       440,000  (430K)

  Total Free: 529,376  (517K)

Free Upper Memory:

  Region   Largest Free     Total Free      Total Size
  ------  --------------   --------------  --------------
       1     9,200   (9K)     9,248   (9K)   27,456  (27K)
       2   166,224 (162K)   166,224 (162K)  196,592 (192K)
```

UMB's, while the I=B000-B7FF option manually creates a 27K upper memory block in a region normally reserved for the monochrome graphics adapter.

If you scan through the startup files (CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT), you'll see that it's mostly standard stuff except for a few unusual items. SSTORDRV.SYS is the driver for SuperStor, the disk compression software that I use, while SSTOR is a simple program that actually installs the compressed disk as a D: drive. RMDEV.SYS is the driver for my Sigma Designs ReelMagic board. (I don't have that many ReelMagic games, but since I also use the board as my sound card, the driver has to stay.) Otherwise it's pretty typical: a mouse driver, a CD-ROM driver and MSCDEX, the Microsoft CD-ROM extensions, and the MS-DOS's SmartDrive disk cache utility.

One thing you'll use often as you configure your system's memory is the MEM utility included with DOS. Just type MEM from any prompt (followed by /C for a more detailed report, and /F for a list of free UMBs) to get a tally of your system's memory usage. Right now, the MEM utility shows that I only have 517K of free base memory to load programs in, and I'd like to have a lot more than that: Few games these days will run if you have less than 560K free, and many want a lot more than that. SmartDrive is the only program that automatically loads itself into upper memory, so there's plenty of room for improvement. Since there are 162K bytes free in the largest UMB and less than 120K of conventional memory is being used, this should be a cinch.

It's Almost Too Easy

With 192K available in the second UMB, you could park a bus up there. In this configuration, loading everything high is just a matter of changing "DEVICE=" lines to "DEVICEHIGH=" in CONFIG.SYS, and inserting "LH" (short for "LOADHIGH") at the start of certain lines in AUTOEXEC.BAT. The "/L:2" option is a manual instruction telling DOS to use the second UMB region. We don't even have to bother with that piddly 27KB UMB. And with 620K bytes free for DOS programs, it's hard to complain about the outcome.

```
Modules using memory below 1 MB:

  Name           Total        =   Conventional   +   Upper Memory
  --------  ----------------   ----------------   ----------------
  MSDOS       12,989   (13K)      12,989   (13K)          0    (0K)
  HIMEM        1,168    (1K)       1,168    (1K)          0    (0K)
  EMM386       3,120    (3K)       3,120    (3K)          0    (0K)
  COMMAND      2,928    (3K)       2,928    (3K)          0    (0K)
  SSTORDRV    47,520   (46K)           0    (0K)     47,520   (46K)
  MTMCDE      20,832   (20K)           0    (0K)     20,832   (20K)
  MOUSE       17,120   (17K)           0    (0K)     17,120   (17K)
  RMDEV        2,384    (2K)           0    (0K)      2,384    (2K)
  MSCDEX      36,224   (35K)           0    (0K)     36,224   (35K)
  SMARTDRV    30,368   (30K)           0    (0K)     30,368   (30K)
  Free       704,624  (688K)     634,960  (620K)     69,664   (68K)

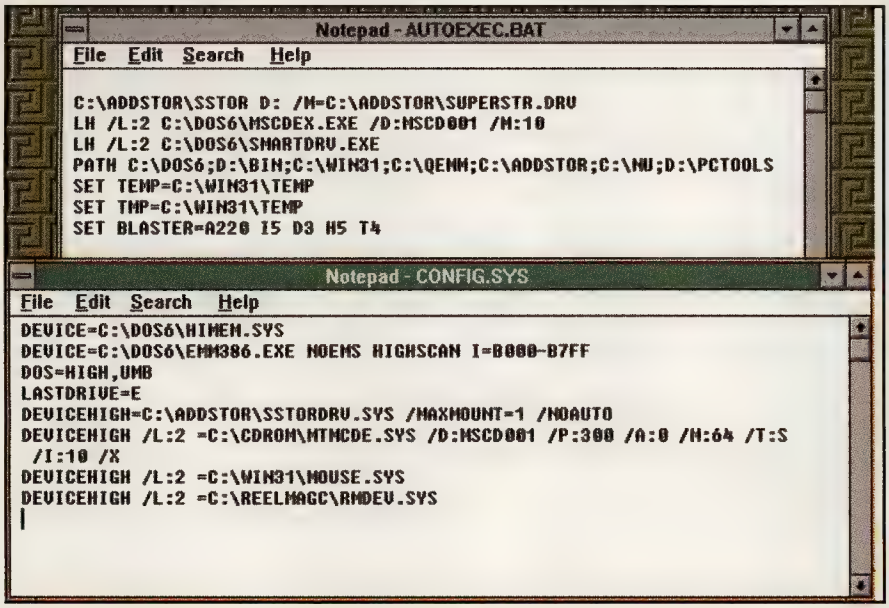
Memory Summary:

  Type of Memory       Total   =    Used    +    Free
  ----------------   ----------   ----------   ----------
  Conventional          655,360       20,400      634,960
  Upper                 224,112      154,448       69,664
  Reserved              131,072      131,072            0
  Extended (XMS)      7,378,064    2,454,672    4,923,392
  ----------------   ----------   ----------   ----------
  Total memory        8,388,608    2,760,592    5,628,016

  Total under 1 MB      879,472      174,848      704,624

  Largest executable program size          634,864   (620K)
  Largest free upper memory block           27,456    (27K)
  MS-DOS is resident in the high memory area.
```

By simply loading some TSRs and device drivers high, I earn a whopping 620K free base RAM!



Using LH in the AUTOEXEC and DEVICEHIGH in the CONFIG tells DOS to load those lines in upper memory.

Playing It Safe

Maximizing DOS memory usually means a lot of testing and experimenting. More than half the time, a change will actually make things worse, and there's always the chance that the system will lock up when you reboot to test a change. There are a couple steps that you can take to reduce the risk, though.

First of all, make safety copies of your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files *before* you start working, so that if things go badly, you can still back up to where you started. And when you make a change to a line, leave the original line in the file and make your changes to a copy of the line. Just put the word "REM" (for "remark") at the start of the line so that DOS knows to ignore it.

As of MS-DOS version 6.00, if the system hangs while it's starting up, you can almost always get it to boot by holding down the Shift key or F5 before DOS loads. This tells DOS to ignore the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files entirely and to start with a totally clean system. You can also press the F8 key to step through CONFIG.SYS one line at a time, which helps a lot when you're trying to figure out which line is making the system hang. With these emergency exits available under DOS 6, boot floppies aren't needed as often as they used to be, but it's still a good idea to have one around. If you need to create one, just type "FORMAT A: /S" at the DOS prompt, then put in a new disk or one that you don't mind erasing — formatting will wipe out all the data on the disk. And that's all there is to it!

Now It Gets Harder

Success stories are nice, but that last example was a little bit artificial. For instance, there are still some games that need EMS memory emulation to access memory beyond one megabyte, and that in turn requires a 64K "EMS page frame" located in the upper memory area. I used MS-DOS's MemMaker program to automatically configure my system with EMS enabled, and here's what I got. Besides scrambling up my nice, neat startup files, it left me with 575KB available. Some people could probably get by with that, but I've seen too many programs that needed 600K or more to run.

As the memory map in DOS's Microsoft Diagnostic utility (type MSD from the DOS prompt) shows, the biggest problem is where MemMaker put the EMS page frame, because it now splits one large UMB into two smaller ones. There's enough free space up there for SuperStor's driver, a 30K improvement, but the space has to be contiguous. Right now, it's split into two separate segments.

```
   Microsoft Diagnostics version 2.01   10/30/94    2:53am   Page  1
 ========================================================================

 ------------------------------ Memory ------------------------------

 Legend:  Available "  "  RAM "##"  ROM "RR"  Possibly Available ".."
   EMS Page Frame "PP"  Used UMBs "UU"  Free UMBs "FF"
 1024K FC00 RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR FFFF  Conventional Memory
       F800 RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR F8FF               Total: 640K
       F400 UUUUFFFFFFFFFFFF F7FF           Available: 574K
  960K F000 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU F3FF                     588464 bytes
       EC00 PPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP EFFF
       E800 PPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP EBFF  Extended Memory
       E400 PPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP E7FF               Total: 7424K
  896K E000 PPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP E3FF
       DC00 FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF DFFF  MS-DOS Upper Memory Blocks
       D800 UUUUFFFFFFFFFFFF DBFF          Total UMBs: 154K
       D400 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU D7FF      Total Free UMBs: 49K
  832K D000 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU D3FF   Largest Free Block: 14K
       CC00 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU CFFF
       C800 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU CBFF  Expanded Memory (EMS)
       C400 RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR C7FF           LIM Version: 4.00
  768K C000 RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR C3FF   Page Frame Address: E000H
       BC00 ################ BFFF               Total: 7744K
       B800 ################ BBFF           Available: 4848K
       B400 UUUUUUFFFFFFFFFF B7FF
  704K B000 ######UUUUUUUUUU B3FF  XMS Information
       AC00                 AFFF          XMS Version: 3.00
       A800                 ABFF       Driver Version: 3.10
       A400                 A7FF     A20 Address Line: Enabled
  640K A000                 A3FF     High Memory Area: In use
                                           Available: 4608K
                                   Largest Free Block: 4608K
                                       Available SXMS: 4608K
                                    Largest Free SXMS: 4608K

                                  VCPI Information
                                         VCPI Detected: Yes
                                               Version: 1.00
                                     Available Memory: 4848K
```

With DOS 6.0 or later, Microsoft Diagnostic (type MSD at the DOS prompt) provides a memory map.

A Definite Improvement

With EMM386's "FRAME=" option relocating the EMS page frame to the C800 segment, we get a solid 128KB UMB to work with — but it still takes a couple more tricks to get above the 600K mark. MTMCDE, my CD-ROM driver, fits nicely in region 1, the 27K UMB in the monochrome graphics area, but I had to load MOUSE.SYS in conventional memory to fit everything else. Still, that only cost me 17K, which isn't too bad.

Before SmartDrive, the last program on the list, would load in upper memory, I also had to shrink the memory requirements of MSCDEX by cutting it from 10 to 6 buffers (the "/M:6" option). I'm using SmartDrive 5.0, part of MS-DOS versions 6.20 and later, which will cache a CD-ROM drive as long as it loads after MSCDEX, so I'm not too concerned about a loss of speed from using fewer buffers. But like

Take Out the Trash

A PC's CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files are sort of its basement and attic; we only go in there when we absolutely have to, and we can't remember where half of the junk in there came from in the first place. Stuff tends to collect in those files — lines added by programs that you once installed, a driver for a card that you don't use anymore, or things that you don't understand but they've always been in there. If one of these lines loads a device driver or program that you don't really need, it wastes valuable memory.

So before you burn hours trying to get everything in both files to load high, go through each file line-by-line and ask yourself whether that line really needs to be there. Look it up in the manual if you have to. You'll find lines lurking inside your CONFIG.SYS that load drivers like ANSI.SYS, which you might be able to live without, and EGA.SYS, which you almost certainly don't need, and lines that set unnecessarily large values for the FILES, BUFFERS, and STACKS keywords. Some programs require special settings for these but, most of the time, DOS's default values are fine. In AUTOEXEC.BAT, look for TSR programs like SETVER.EXE, DOSKEY.COM and SHARE.EXE, which you might not need, and for other utilities that you can live without. If you need them,

Notepad - AUTOEXEC.BAT

File Edit Search Help

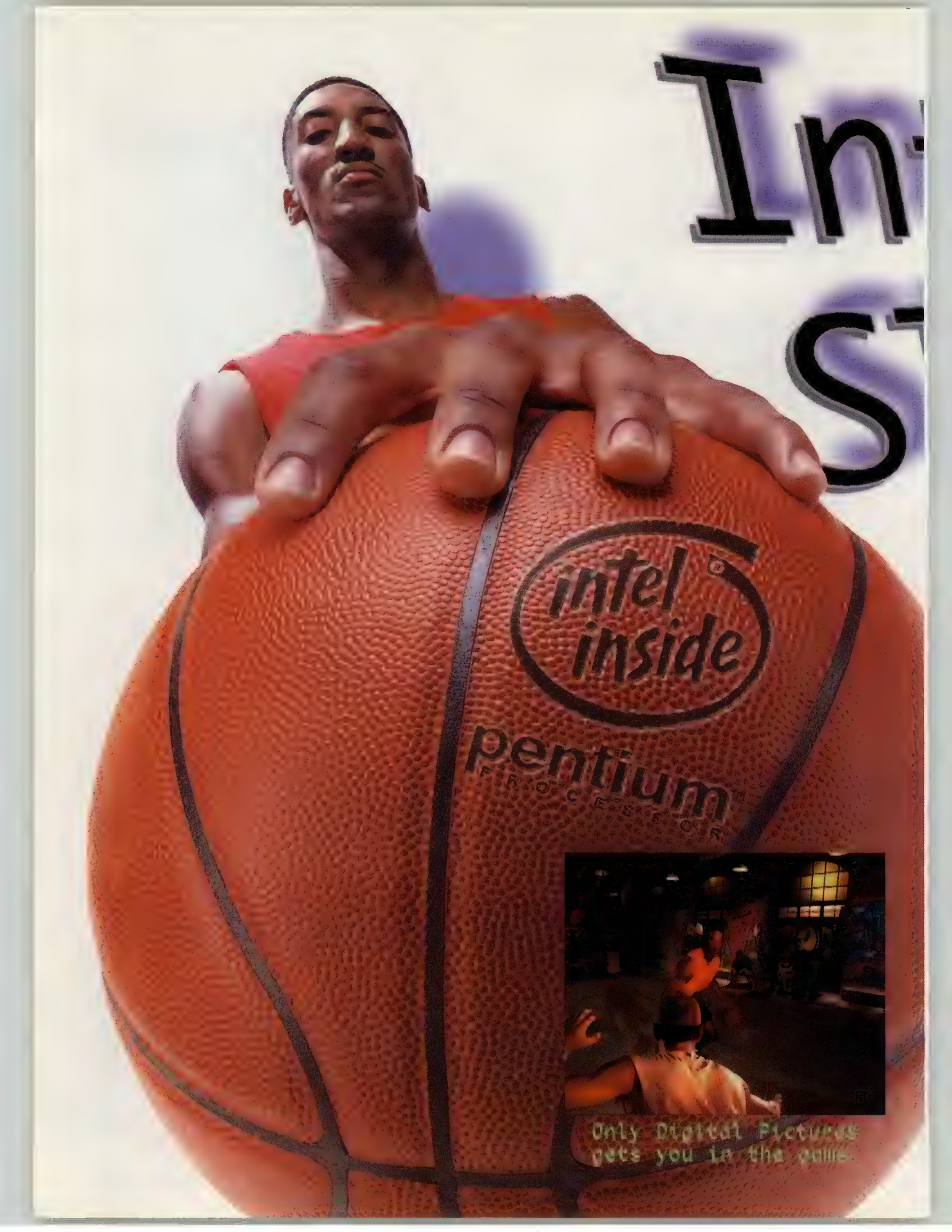
```
C:\ADDSTOR\SSTOR D: /M=C:\ADDSTOR\SUPERSTR.DRV
LH /L:2 C:\DOS6\MSCDEX.EXE /D:MSCD001 /M:6
LH /L:2 C:\DOS6\SMARTDRV.EXE
PATH C:\DOS6;D:\BIN;C:\WIN31;C:\QEMM;C:\ADDSTOR;C:\NU;D:\PCTOOLS
SET TEMP=C:\WIN31\TEMP
SET TMP=C:\WIN31\TEMP
SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D3 H5 T4
```

Notepad - CONFIG.SYS

File Edit Search Help

```
DEVICE=C:\DOS6\HIMEM.SYS
DEVICE=C:\DOS6\EMM386.EXE RAM HIGHSCAN I=B000-B7FF FRAME=C800
DOS=HIGH,UMB
LASTDRIVE=E
DEVICEHIGH /L:2 =C:\ADDSTOR\SSTORDRV.SYS /MAXMOUNT=1 /NOAUTO
DEVICEHIGH /L:1 =C:\CDROM\MTMCDE.SYS /D:MSCD001 /P:300 /A:0 /M:64 /T:S
/I:10 /X
DEVICE=C:\WIN31\MOUSE.SYS
DEVICEHIGH /L:2 =C:\REELMAGC\RMDEV.SYS
```

With the NOEMS switch removed from the EMM386.EXE line in the CONFIG, you now get Expanded Memory.


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DigiChrome

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Digital Pictures



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Product Information Number 99

```
Modules using memory below 1 MB:

  Name           Total        =   Conventional   +   Upper Memory
  --------  ------------------  ----------------  ----------------
  MSDOS      13,805   (13K)      13,805   (13K)        0    (0K)
  HIMEM       1,168    (1K)       1,168    (1K)        0    (0K)
  EMM386      3,120    (3K)       3,120    (3K)        0    (0K)
  MOUSE      17,088   (17K)      17,088   (17K)        0    (0K)
  COMMAND     2,928    (3K)       2,928    (3K)        0    (0K)
  MTMCDE     20,832   (20K)           0    (0K)   20,832   (20K)
  SSTORDRV   47,520   (46K)           0    (0K)   47,520   (46K)
  RMDEV       2,384    (2K)           0    (0K)    2,384    (2K)
  MSCDEX     27,952   (27K)           0    (0K)   27,952   (27K)
  SMARTDRV   30,368   (30K)           0    (0K)   30,368   (30K)
  Free      647,376  (632K)     617,872  (603K)   29,504   (29K)

Memory Summary:

  Type of Memory       Total   =    Used    +    Free
  ----------------  ----------  ----------  ----------
  Conventional         655,360      37,488     617,872
  Upper                158,560     129,056      29,504
  Reserved             131,072     131,072           0
  Extended (XMS)*    7,443,616   2,725,024   4,718,592
  ----------------  ----------  ----------  ----------
  Total memory       8,388,608   3,022,640   5,365,968

  Total under 1 MB     813,920     166,544     647,376

  Total Expanded (EMS)                     7,929,856 (7,744K)
  Free Expanded (EMS)*                     4,964,352 (4,848K)

  * EMM386 is using XMS memory to simulate EMS memory as needed.
    Free EMS memory may change as free XMS memory changes.

  Largest executable program size          617,776   (603K)
  Largest free upper memory block           22,768    (22K)
  MS-DOS is resident in the high memory area.
```

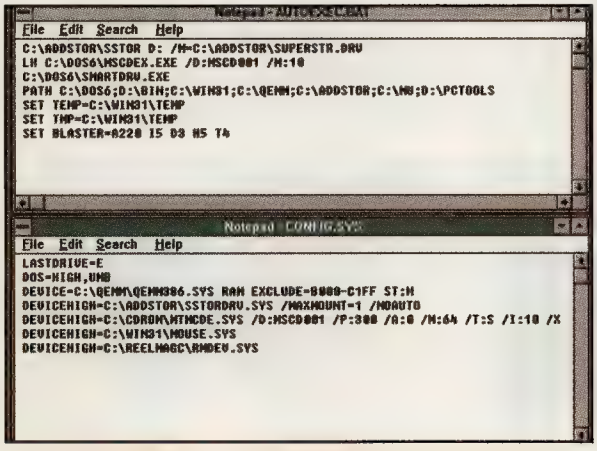
You'd think that 22K block of upper memory would be enough for that 17K mouse driver, but the mouse driver is actually bugger than 22K when it first loads.

any other change, it's best to test to make sure it isn't a problem.

If you looked at the output from the MEM command, you might have noticed that the largest free upper memory block contains 22KB, which should have been enough to hold the 17K mouse driver. But when I tried to load it high, SmartDrive dropped back into conventional memory, netting me a 13KB loss. The problem is that most DOS drivers and TSRs take up more space when they start themselves up than when they're loaded and resident. In each UMB region, the last module that loads will leave some slack space, the difference between its size when it loaded and its final size. It's kind of frustrating to see that space sitting idle, and third-party memory managers like Quarterdeck's QEMM and Qualitas' 386Max offer ways to temporarily stretch UMBs while a module loads. But this is the best we can do with EMM386.

A000 to C7FF. Without the 27K UMB that we found down there, available memory would drop back to about 580KB. EMM386 has done fairly well so far, but we've already pushed it to its limit, so my standard setup uses Quarterdeck's QEMM memory manager. I even use the dreaded "Stealth mode", which locates UMBs on top of video and BIOS ROMS, then remaps the ROMs through the EMS page frame as they're needed.

The MSD memory map shows how it works: the single UMB starts at C200, where video ROM would normally be and, with most of the BIOS ROM mapped out, the EMS page frame sits way up at the EC00 segment. Everything loads in upper memory, and the QEMM.SYS driver module also replaces MS-DOS's HIMEM.SYS, even though it's smaller than EMM386.SYS alone. That nets another thousand or so bytes, for a total of over 621K available. Stealth mode has picked up a reputation for instability and incompatibility, and maybe it is on some systems. As the saying goes, your mileage may vary, but I wouldn't want to try to get along without it.



I'm now using QEMM in place of EMM386, and getting better results!

Pike Position With A Full Twist

I use an accelerated video card, which makes Windows run much faster, but there's a big catch: when it's running in high display resolutions, the video card needs the *entire* address space from

Knowing When You've Done Enough

There's a nerdy kind of satisfaction that comes with getting every device driver and TSR loaded into upper memory. If you get to that point, you can count on having about 620K of conventional memory available, enough to run any game out there. But if it simply isn't possible to get everything loaded high, that isn't necessarily cause for despair; only a few games are so greedy that they demand much over 600KB, and with the increasing popularity of DOS extenders, that first 640K of memory is becoming less and less precious. For example, *Doom* will run with less than 400K of conventional DOS memory free, as long as you have a couple megabytes of extended memory available for it to use. In general, 600KB of free DOS memory will be do the job most of the time, and that's an achievable goal for most systems.

PCG

```
   Microsoft Diagnostics version 2.01   10/30/94    4:03am   Page  1

------------------------------ Memory ------------------------------

 Legend:  Available "  "  RAM "##"  ROM "RR"  Possibly Available ".."
   EMS Page Frame "PP"  Used UMBs "UU"  Free UMBs "FF"
 1024K FC00 RRRRRRRRRRRRFFFF FFFF  Conventional Memory
       F800 PPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP EBFF                Total: 640K
       F400 PPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP F7FF            Available: 621K
  960K F000 PPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP F3FF                       636864 bytes
       EC00 PPPPPPPPPPPPPPPP EFFF
       E800 FFFFFFFFFFFFFFFF EBFF  Extended Memory
       E400 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUFF E7FF                Total: 7424K
  896K E000 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU E3FF
       DC00 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU DFFF  MS-DOS Upper Memory Blocks
       D800 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU DBFF          Total UMBs: 171K
       D400 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU D7FF      Total Free UMBs: 20K
  832K D000 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU D3FF   Largest Free Block: 17K
       CC00 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU CFFF
       C800 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU CBFF  Expanded Memory (EMS)
       C400 UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU C7FF            LIM Version: 4.00
  768K C000 RRRRRRRRUUUUUUUU C3FF   Page Frame Address: EC00H
       BC00 ################ BFFF                Total: 764K
       B800 ################ BBFF            Available: 484BK
       B400                 B7FF
  704K B000                 B3FF  XMS Information
       AC00                 AFFF          XMS Version: 3.00
       A800                 ABFF       Driver Version: 6.02
       A400                 A7FF     A20 Address Line: Enabled
  640K A000                 A3FF     High Memory Area: In use
                                             Available: 484BK
                                   Largest Free Block: 484BK
                                      Available SXMS: 484BK
                                   Largest Free SXMS: 484BK

                               UCPI Information
                                     UCPI Detected: Yes
                                           Version: 1.00
                                  Available Memory: 4852K
```

The key to success is obvious: a whole block of contiguous upper memory!

How Big is a K?

"K" stands for "kilo". Literally, it means "one thousand," but it actually stands for 1024 bytes. PCs use binary (base two) arithmetic, and since 1024 happens to be two raised to the tenth power, it's a number that shows up in many different places. Twenty-four bytes one way or the other might not seem like much, but if a game needs 600K of free memory to run (614,400 bytes) and your PC only has 600,000 available (about 586K), then the show's over before it's even started.



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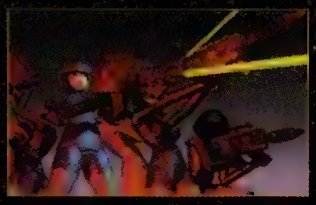
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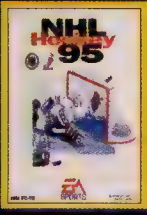
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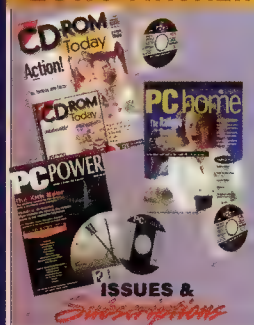
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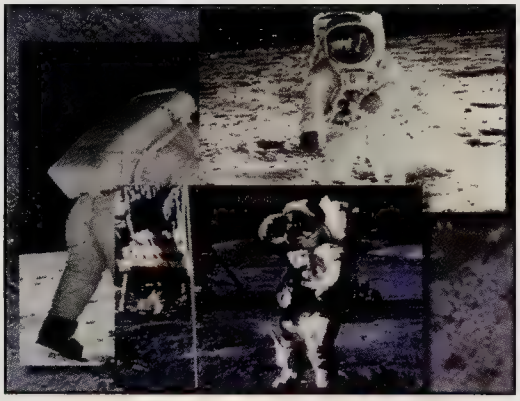
Beyond Gaming

A quick survey of non-game CD-ROMs of special interest to the inquisitive gamer

David A. Wade

Look, I'm not going to claim that CD-ROMs have changed the world. But I certainly think that they are beginning to change the way that many of us find out about things in the world. Multimedia discs have given us new ways of consulting huge masses of information, discovering the connections that interest us, and linking together what we've learned.

CD-ROMs — the better ones, at least — encourage us to explore whole realms of knowledge at our own pace, pursuing our own lines of enquiry, and forging fresh links to aid our understanding of the material. And they do all this with infinite patience, allowing us to pursue our fascination with history, or World War II aircraft, or anything else that interests us at our own pace, and in ways that weren't possible just a few years ago.



Space exploration is the subject of several fine CD-ROMs

Multimedia programs bring their subject matter to life: we can actually hear Roosevelt and Churchill's stirring speeches for ourselves, or listen as a native speaker pronounces a difficult foreign word, or watch an animated map as it charts an unfolding military campaign. CD-ROMs really have made finding out about things a whole lot more enjoyable than it used to be.

As the Disc Editor and a contributor to *CD-ROM Today*, dozens of discs pass over, by, or near my desk every week. So when Matt asked me to choose a few non-gaming titles that shouldn't be overlooked by his own hardcore readership, I thought "Hey, that should be easy." Wrong! A couple of years ago— even a few months back — it would have been possible to compile a fairly exhaustive list of recommended discs. Now there are just so many being published that it's impossible to be definitive.



Modern fighter planes bring their own high-flying excitement to multimedia.

The other problem is that the fine

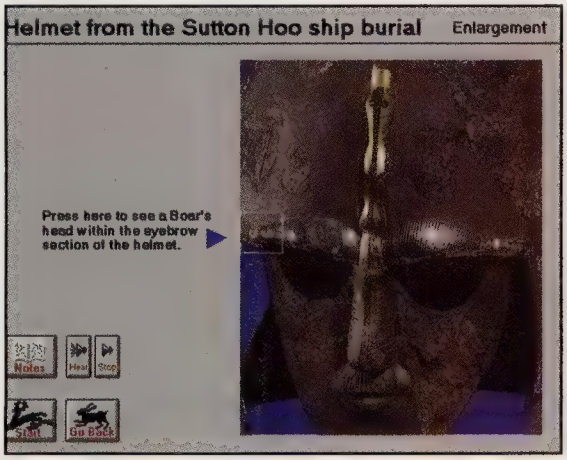


Explore the might and majesty of ancient civilizations on Microsoft's *Ancient Lands*.

shading between reference, education, edutainment, and game programs is hopelessly smudged. *Castles II*, for example, which I would categorize as a "game disc," contains some excellent documentary clips about the building and management of castles. On the other hand, some reference/education titles have so many built-in games that it's hard to know if they're meant to be learning aids or merely so many sales points.

Anyway, I conscientiously compiled a shortlist of titles that (a) I felt would make worthwhile additions to your own collections, (b) exploit multimedia resources to the fullest (and some of them really push the envelope!), and (c) in many cases, have an informational content that will add an extra dimension to your computing gaming activities. I drew up a list of nearly a hundred titles, then cut it back and organized the final choices into the broad categories of history (general, sort of), military history, aeronautics and space exploration, plus some quick comments on the side about movie databases and general reference works.

The bias towards historical titles is deliberate. So many of the reality-based simulators and games you play are, in effect, alternate history generators — in most cases, the object being to get things to work out differently from the recorded facts (e.g., have your Panzers seize Moscow before winter sets in) — that the more you know about the actual events that did take place, the more enjoyment you'll get from replaying them.



Relics from the past are on display on *The Anglo-Saxons* CD-ROM

Historically Speaking

If you view the process of acquiring knowledge as an exciting voyage of discovery, then what better place to start than with *The Discoverers* (Knowledge Adventure). The disc is an interactive and expanded version of the prize-winning IMAX movie, based on Daniel Boorstin's *The Discoverers: A History of Man's Search to Know His World and Himself*. This delightfully wide-ranging exploration takes you from Magellan's voyage across the unknown oceans of the world to the Magellan probe into outer space. It's a multimedia trip well worth taking.

If you wish to journey back to the beginnings of civilization, a good launch pad is *Ancient Lands* (Microsoft) which blends beautiful artwork, photos, video clips, animation, narration, and hypertext into dazzling portraits of the glorious ages of Egypt, Greece and Rome. Ancient history is so skillfully brought to life that this disc will whet the appetite of any budding Indiana Jones. History was never like this at school! This CD-ROM is a treasure chest in itself.

Want to find out more about the *real* backgrounds behind those quasi-mythical/medieval roleplaying games? Here are two suggestions: *The Anglo-Saxons* (Cambrix) brings to life the rich culture that flourished in England between 400 and 600 A.D. Produced with the cooperation of the British Museum, this is a stunning reference guide. The ruins and remains of the age of chivalry are explored on *Mindquest: Medieval France* (Blue Mountain) — a soothing, civilized Grand Tour of the cathedrals and castles of a later and even more romantic era.



Leonardo da Vinci was ahead of his time, and sometimes in the strangest of ways — as with this 'repeater' crossbow!

If one person ever represented an entire age in the development of the West, then it would have to be that genius of the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci. This multi-talented seer is well-served by a brilliant new disc, *Leonardo, the Inventor* (Interactive), which brings the man and his times vividly to life. Watch the sketches from his notebooks morph into action! This colorful CD-ROM is packed with videos, 3D animation, good humor, and even a Renaissance "flight sim." The highest compliment one can pay to the designers of this disc is that if Leonardo could slip it into a computer right now, he'd thoroughly approve of this multimedia biography.

For an overview of U.S. presidential history, check out *The Presidents: It All Started With George* (National Geographic). You can examine their careers

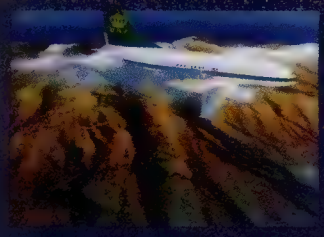
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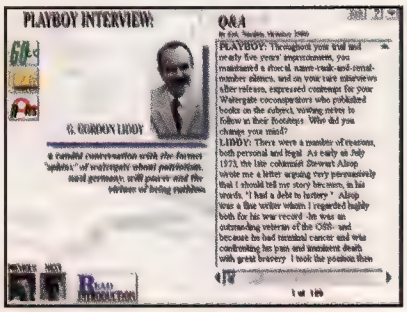




rainbow

TRIMARK INTERACTIVE

Product Information Number 150



G.Gordon Liddy, a key player in the Watergate affair, is interviewed on the Playboy disc.

chronologically (along an interactive time-line) or alphabetically, delve into the background details of their various elections, their presidential powers and partners, or even play a presidential game.

The tragic puzzle of Kennedy's shooting is given a close-up treatment on *J.F.K. Assassination: A Visual Investigation* (Medio). You can study the Zapruder film frame by frame, or consider the speculative theory presented in Jim Marr's text, "Crossfire." I bet those conspiracy buffs who painstakingly earmarked and underlined the Warren Report wish they'd had that multi-volume assessment on disc — and now it is.



Explore what happened in Dallas, from a dozen different angles, on *J.F.K. Assassination: A Visual Investigation.*

For an insider's look at a presidential tragedy of a different kind, *The Haldeman Diaries: Inside the Nixon White House* (Medio) are open for inspection. They offer a unique behind-the-scenes perspective on the complex events known now as Watergate. Morbidly fascinating, this title sets new standards for CD-ROMs as multimedia historical resources.

A novelist friend of mine, whose output of Cold War thrillers brought him a certain measure of fame and fortune, found that his career collapsed along with the Berlin Wall. The building of that infamous wall, one of the pivotal events in 20th century history, is the subject of *Seven Days in August* (Time Warner). An extraordinary exercise in historical research, this disc combines hundreds of photographs, computer graphics, hours of narration, learning games, and a roundtable, multi-faceted examination of this historical turning point that plunged Russia and the West into a thirty-year Cold War. An essential title for understanding the contemporary world.

Another way of grasping the important events of recent history is to read, and sometimes listen to, the words of the very people who helped shape their own times. For more than thirty years, *Playboy* magazine has been talking to the famous and the infamous -- celebrities who must be considered key players in the unfolding drama, comedy, and tragedy of modern life. The entire run of 352 of these in-depth discussions has been gathered on *The Playboy Interviews* (Multimedia Publishing). One of the things that makes this disc so compelling is to read the very words they said back then and to consider what has happened to many of these individuals since; check out the O.J. Simpson interview, for instance. Like I've always said, "I read Playboy for the interviews" — and this disc lends complete credibility to that old excuse.



Photographs (like this one), video clips, sound bites, and journal entries bring *The Haldeman Diaries* to life.



The Discovery Channel has launched an impressive series of CD-ROMs, including Normandy: The Great Crusade

Well worth mentioning is the forthcoming *Her Heritage: A Biographical Encyclopedia of Famous American Women* (Pilgrim), a multimedia encyclopedia that spotlights the achievements of more than a thousand American women. Sound and movie clips, photos, and biographical information are woven into this interactive guide -- a much-needed addition if you want to give balance to your historical reference collection.

The Militaristic Touch

Considering the sheer volume of military history titles available from paper-based publishers, it's surprising that this category isn't better served by CD-ROM designers. It's even more curious when you consider how many military history buffs extend their interests and enjoy their hobby via computer games and simulations. The situation is slowly changing for the better but, in the meantime, here are a handful of discs worth adding to your collection.



There are several excellent CD-ROMs that use the resources of multimedia to bring the dark days of World War II back to life.

For Civil War devotees, the most eagerly awaited media event in recent years was the premiere of Ted Turner's colossal production of *Gettysburg.*

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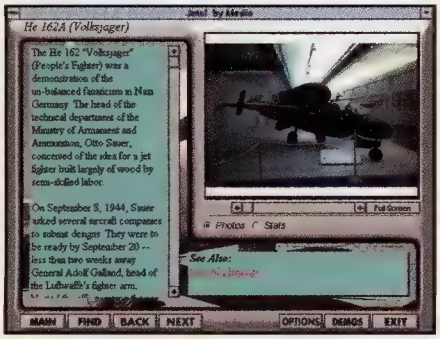
A montage of the great conflict in the skies (1939-1945) introduces The Discovery Channel's *Wings Over Europe*, an examination of the role of airpower in World War II.

Footage from that epic movie, including out takes not seen before, is strewn throughout *Gettysburg: Multimedia Battle Simulation* (Turner Interactive). This is a much-enhanced version of the disk-based simulator, with audio, movie clips, animated maps, and background data added for the CD-ROM. The narration is by Civil War expert Shelby Foote.

Right now, we're going through a whole procession of fiftieth anniversaries celebrating the turning points of World War II. It's not surprising, then, that several discs were released to celebrate the D-Day invasion that would eventually liberate Europe. *Normandy: The Great Crusade* (Discovery) is based on the Discovery Channel's superb documentary of the same name. This impressionistic collage of video clips, personal letters, maps and drawings, photos, biographies, and a terrific soundtrack evokes those dark and desperate days when the fate of a continent literally hung in the balance. Stirring stuff indeed!

For more in-depth information on the fateful invasion, you should turn to *Normandy: The Invasion of France* (Quanta). This is a text-centered disc of essential reference material on the D-Day landings, which largely lets the information speak for itself.

You'd think the Vietnam War, that most media-chronicled of all conflicts, would be well represented on CD-ROM. But that isn't the case — not yet, at least. *USA Wars: Vietnam* (Quanta) wins a mention here almost by default, since it's literally about the only game in town. The USA Wars' series from Quanta Press is of variable quality, and the Vietnam volume is one of the better ones, both from the point of view of the material it contains and the interface. The same publisher also puts out a 'Desert Storm' disc, but the more interesting choice on that conflict is the compilation of Time's coverage of that lightning war in *Desert Storm: The War in the Persian Gulf* (Time Warner). (Note: *Even as we go to press, there's news of three new CD-ROMs about the war in Vietnam.*)



Jets, an encyclopedia of flight, traces the evolution of supersonic planes.

On the Wings of Love

For some reason, aviation seems to draw out the most creative talents in CD-ROM designers. If your system is up to it — MPC2, and not just the bare minimum either -- then any of the following discs will really show it off at its best.

Daring to Fly (Arnowitz Studios) is a single-disc survey of aeronautical history from Icarus of Greek mythology, through the Wright brothers' successful lift-off, and on to the daring exploits of the fighter aces of World War I. The Discovery Channel picks up the thread and focuses on the vital contribution of air power during World War II in *Wings Over Europe* (Discovery), a beautifully designed scrapbook, giving not only the facts and figures of the fighting machines but also the human emotions behind the joysticks.

Wild Blue Yonder (Spectrum-Holobyte) is going to be a multi-volume, multimedia history of flight. "Fifty Years of Gs and Jets," the first title available in the *WBY* series, is a superb overview of the developments from first breaking the sound barrier to the supersonic planes of tomorrow.

Jets (Medio) is another very competent encyclopedia of jet flight. But for a real reference work, I'd give the edge to *Warplanes: Modern Fighting Aircraft* (Maris), which mixes details on hundreds

The Silver Screen Connection

More and more these days, as mainstream entertainment companies move toward interactive entertainment, movies are becoming inextricably linked with the world of PC gaming. Many of the most exciting action and sci-fi/fantasy flicks in recent years have become best-selling games, like Indiana Jones, Lawnmower Man, and of course the Star Wars series. And now the wheel has turned, and several of the most popular games (like *Doom*) are being adapted for the silver screen.

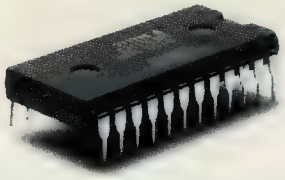
If you want to find out more about films and filmmaking, you've got lots of discs to choose from — but buyer beware, as some titles, like the *Mega Movie Guide* and the *Motion Picture Guide to Horror and Science Fiction Films* are not half as interesting as the blurbs on their boxes try to suggest.

The two best CD-ROM databases for film fans are *VideoHound Multimedia* (Visible Ink) and *Cinemania 95* (Microsoft). *VideoHound* has the edge when it comes to the sheer number of titles covered, and for the way it can generate some very intriguing category lists, like "Supernatural Cop Thrillers" or movies about "Yuppie Nightmares." *Cinemania 95*, building on the annual discs before it, has a more sophisticated interface and somewhat more detailed critiques, include many lengthy encyclopedia entries on the history and development of the cinema. Both are keepers. And both are highly addictive. Try looking up a movie: go on — betcha can't stop at just one!



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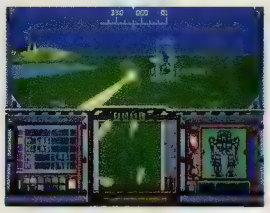
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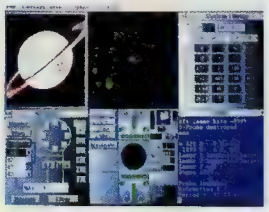
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Product Information Number 104

of planes with analyses of air combat in several recent conflicts. Of course, there's always the authoritative Jane's publications, but the CD-ROM versions are still priced way beyond the pockets of individual consumers.

You can follow the story of humankind's outward urge into the stratosphere and beyond with *Americans in Space* (Multicom), a disc packed with evocative video, photos and sounds. If your memory of Armstrong's first steps on the moon is a rather pale, almost ghostly image, then you owe it to yourself to check out the video quality on this disc.

Ever wonder what it really takes to be an astronaut? Get an insider's peek at just how much of "the right stuff" you need with *Shuttle Astronaut* (AVCA). To find out more about the exploration of our galaxy, turn to another fine disc from Discovery, *Beyond Planet Earth*. What lies ahead for space explorers in the 21st century? Will we finally mount a mission to Mars? *Beyond Planet Earth* takes an expert view of what the future holds. If you want to take one more step beyond and get the really big picture, you can explore the whole universe on the astronomy disc *Red Shift* (Maris). This private planetarium-on-a-platter is awesome, in the real sense of that word.

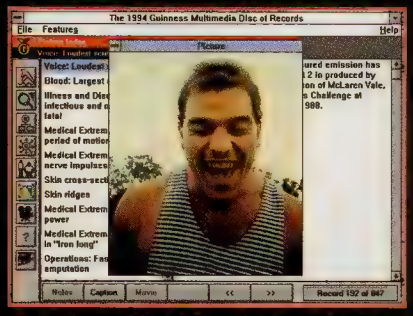
And finally, if you really want to

Title	Format	Publisher	Phone	Price
Americans in Space	Windows	Multicom Publishing	206-622-5530	$39.95
American Heritage Talking Dictionary	Windows	Softkey International	800-227-5609	
Ancient Lands	Windows	Microsoft	800-426-9400	$79.95
Anglo-Saxons, The	Windows	Cambrix Publishing	800-992-8781	$59.95
Beyond Planet Earth	Windows	Discovery	301-986-1999	$49.95
Daring to Fly	Windows	Arnowitz Studios	415-383-2878	$69.95
Desert Storm: The War in the Persian Gulf	DOS/Windows	Time Warner Interactive	818-953-7903	$49.99
Discoverers, The	DOS/Windows	Knowledge Adventure	800-542-4240	$39.95
Gettysburg: Multimedia Battle Simulator	Windows	Swfte	302-234-1740	$49.95
Guinness Multimedia Disc of Records	DOS/Windows	Grolier Electronic Publishing	800-285-4534	$49.95
Haldeman Diaries, The Inside the Nixon White House	Windows	Sony ImageSoft	310-449-2999	$69.95
Her Heritage: A Biographical Encyclopedia of Famous American Women	DOS	Pilgrim New Media	617-491-7600	$49.95
J.F.K. Assassination A Visual Guide	Windows	Medio Multimedia	800-788-3866	$59.95
Jets	Windows	Medio Multimedia	800-788-3866	$59.95
Leonardo The Inventor	Windows	Interactive Electronic Publishing	800-472-8777	$49.95
Library of the Future 3.0	DOS/Windows	World Library	714-748-7197	$299.00
Microsoft Bookshelf	Windows	Microsoft	800-426-9400	$69.95
Microsoft Cinemania 95	Windows	Microsoft	800-426-9400	$59.95
Microsoft Encarta Multimedia Encyclopedia	Windows	Microsoft	800-426-9400	$99.95
Mindquest: Medieval France	Windows	Blue Mountain Software	206-457-0024	$79.95
Normandy: The Great Crusade	Windows	Discovery	301-986-1999	$49.95
Normandy: The Invasion of France	Windows	Quanta Press	612-379-3956	$69.95
Playboy Interviews, The	Windows	Multimedia Publishing Studio	800-898-8842	$59.95
Redshift	Windows	Maris Multimedia	510-254-9700	$64.95
Seven Days in August	DOS	Time Warner Interactive	404-238-5208	$59.99
Shuttle Astronaut	DOS	AVCA	512-250-9632	$99.95
Small Blue Planet	Windows	Now What Software	415-885-1689	$159.00
Street Atlas	Windows	DeLorme	800-452-5931	$99.00
Time Almanac of The 20th Century	Windows	Compact Publishing	202-244-4770	$69.95
USA Wars: Desert Storm	DOS	Quanta Press	612-379-3956	$69.95
USA Wars: Vietnam	DOS	Quanta Press	612-379-3956	$69.95
Videohound Multimedia	Windows	Visible Ink Software	800-735-HOUND	$79.95
Warplanes: Modern Fighting Aircraft	Windows	Maris/Maxis (U.S.)	800-33-MAXIS	$59.95
Walkthroughs and Flybys	DOS	Waite Publishing Group	800-368-9369	$32.95
Wayzata World Factbook	Windows	Wayzata Technology	218-326-0597	$39.00
Wild Blue Yonder: Fifty Years of Gs and Jets.	Windows	Spectrum-Holobyte	800-695-GAME	No MSRP
Wings Over Europe	Windows	Discovery	301-986-1999	$49.95
World Atlas 5.0	Windows	Software Toolworks	800-883-3088	$59.95

Right Beside My Keyboard

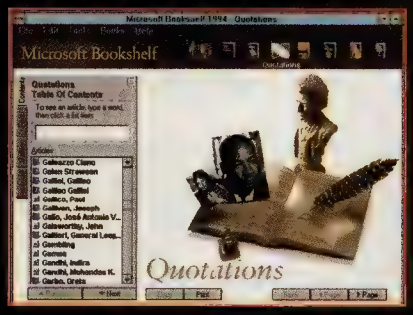
Here's a checklist of the CD-ROM reference works always kept close at hand on my desktop:

1. For quick reference: *Microsoft Bookshelf*
2. For other words: *American Heritage Talking Dictionary*
3. For more detail: *Microsoft Encarta*



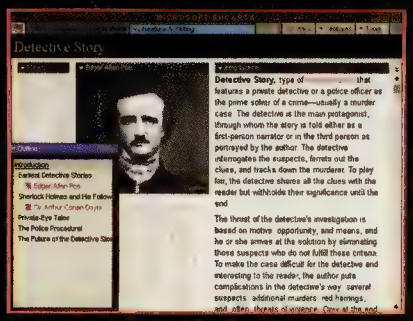
The Guinness Disc of Records is a fascinating reference book — and it's a lot of fun just to browse through!

4. For superlatives: *Guinness Multimedia Disc of World Records*
5. For a global grasp: *Small Blue Planet*



Microsoft's Bookshelf combines several essential refence works

6. For a digital atlas: *World Atlas 5.0*
7. For the lay of the land: *Street Atlas*
8. For a gazeteer: *Wayzata World Factbook*
9. For contemporary history: *Time Almanac of the 20th Century*
10. For the ultimate book collection: *Library of the Future 3.0*



Microsoft Encarta sports a brand new interface on its latest edition



Superb aerial photgraphs, animated diagrams, and great sound effects are all combined in *Wild Blue Yonder*



Pick the plane that interests you from this briefing room chart in *Wings Over Europe*.



Voyage to the far reaches of outer space with the dynamic Redshift disc.



Cutaway diagrams enhance our understanding of jet fighters on Wild Blue Yonder.

show your system strutting its stuff, try a collection of state-of-the-art demos called *Walkthroughs and Flybys* (Waite). Zoom in, around, and through some mind-blowing realms that could only be created in the heart of a computer. This extraordinary compilation of stunning graphics and sound FX is extremely demanding, but if you're willing to tweak your system, it'll repay you with a dazzling display second to none. More multimedia bang for your buck than any other disc around!

From life in ancient times to the furthest reaches of outer space, the discs mentioned here all turn finding out about the world around you into the greatest game of all. And the best thing is that it's a no-lose proposition -- you can't help but be a winner! Multimedia titles like these make exploring new realms of knowledge more fun than it's ever been before. Whatever specific topic interests you, there are stimulating CD-ROMs waiting to expand your horizons. And what's *really* exciting is that they're only going to get better.

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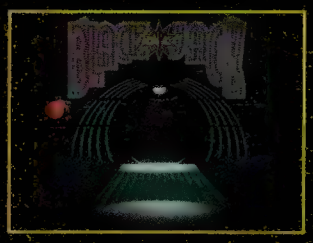
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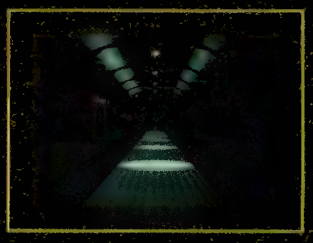


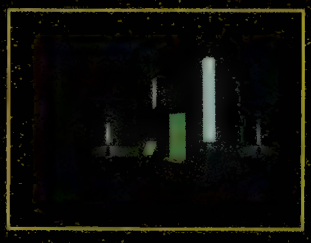
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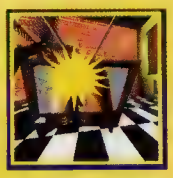


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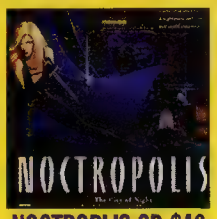
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Feel the sensual heat when 3 gorgeous girls win a fantasy weekend in sunny Spain.



Video Magazine I $34
Private Video Magazine #1 sold over 50,000 copies in Europe.

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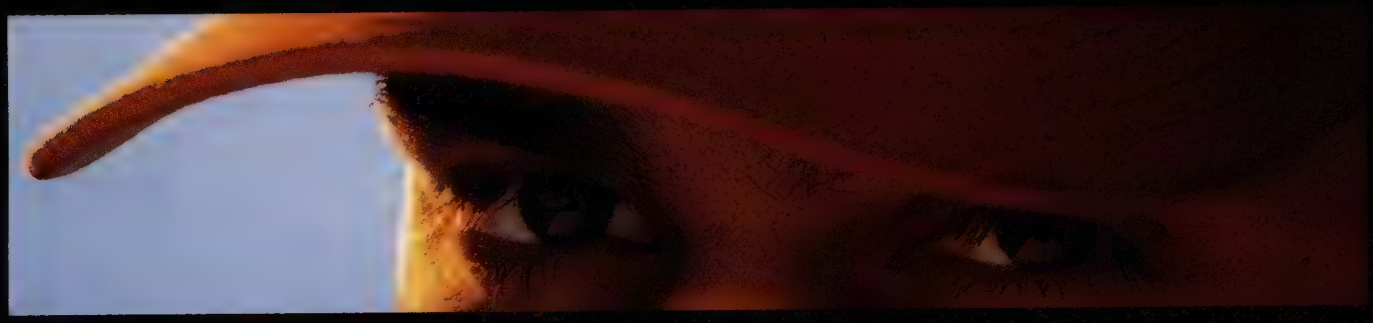
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Product Information Number 82

How It Works:

The PC Gamer Rating System

We love gaming, and when a new title arrives here at *PC Gamer* for review, everyone crowds around for a look. Next we get that game into the hands of a reviewer who's an expert in that particular genre, to make sure it's evaluated fairly and thoroughly. Then, we call 'em like we see 'em. No matter what.

What the Ratings Mean

100%-90% Classic

is an instant classic — a game that's truly significant in both content and design, and one that we'd recommend without reservation to anyone interested in PC gaming.

89%-80% Excellent

— it may be the best 7th Cavalry simulation on the market, but not all of us want to relive Little Bighorn.

79%-70% Very Good

69%-60% Good

but probably has some significant flaws.

59%-50% Fair

great way to spend your gaming dollar, either.

49%-40% Below Average

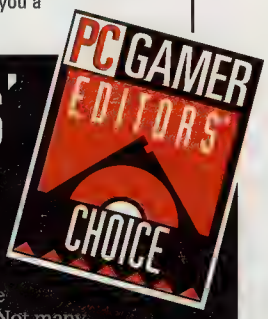
39%-0% Don't Bother

Just terrible games — and the lower you go, the worse they didn't warn you!

Hardware Requirements

With each *PC Gamer* review come two very important pieces of information: the game's minimum hardware requirements, and the hardware configurations we'd recommend as the least you'll need to *really* enjoy the game. The thing is, while a program generally will run on the minimum system as specified by the manufacturer, it'll often be so clunky and slow all the fun goes out of it. Because of this, we test each game independently on a variety of machines, so we can bring you a more realistic assessment of what you'll really need.

PC Gamer Editors' Choice Awards



Each and every month, we honor the best games we see — those earning 88% or above — with our coveted Editors' Choice Award. Not many titles can win the Editor's Choice, so when you see it on a package you can be assured you're buying the best. Guaranteed.







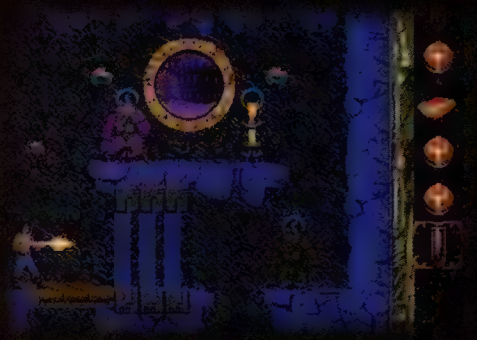




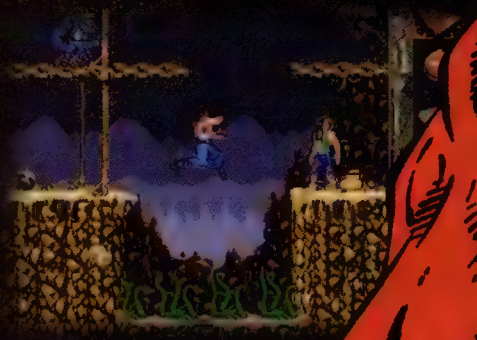
This month's Editors' Choice winners — check out the reviews, and find out why!

VIOLENCE

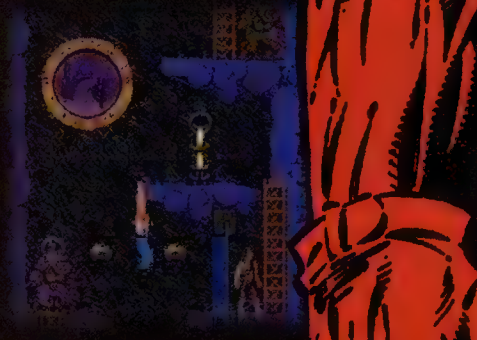
SOMETIMES IT'S THE ONLY WAY.



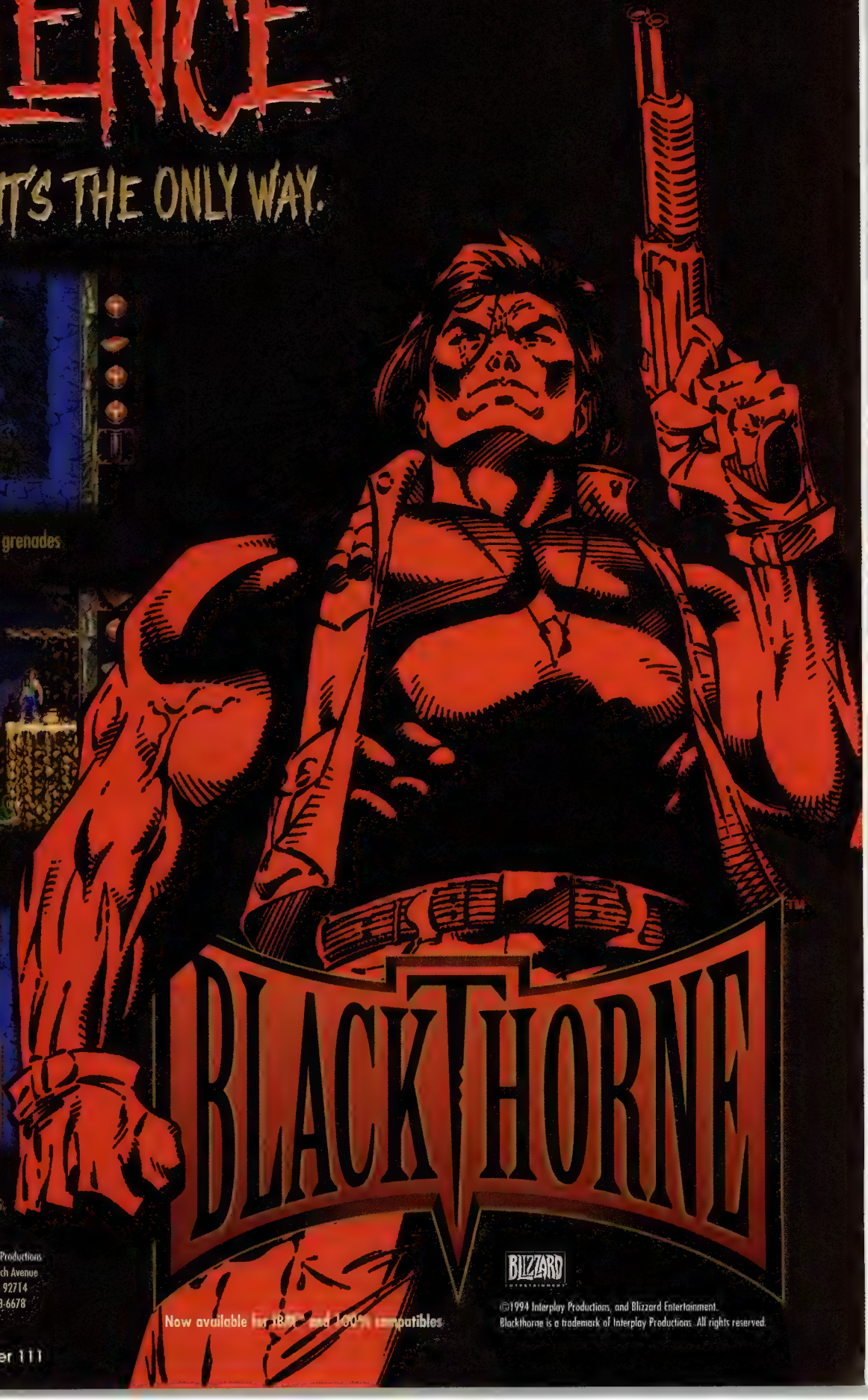
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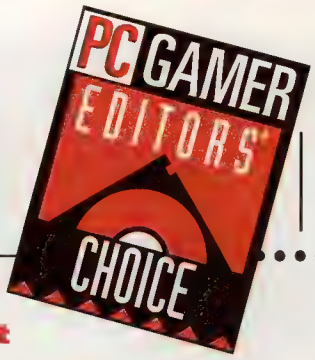
BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

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Product Information Number 111

CD-ROM

Under a Killing Moon



Category: Graphic adventure
Developer: Access
Publisher: Access, 4910 W. Amelia Earhart Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84116 (800)-800-4880

Can a guy with a dirty trenchcoat and a bad credit history really save the world? Stay tuned...

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
CD-ROM drive; 386/25MHz; 4MB RAM; SVGA; 2MB Hard-drive space; mouse; Supported Sound Cards	Double-speed CD-ROM drive; 486; 16MB RAM; VESA Local Bus video; 10MB Hard-drive space; 16-bit Sound Card

M.S.R.P.: $99.95

"Anything worthwhile is worth waiting for." It's an old saying that's sometimes forgotten these days, as instant gratification and untempered impatience have become the order of the day — especially in the computer gaming industry. Here in the *PC Gamer* offices we've received more finished games that should've been labeled "works in progress" than we care to contemplate. So it's refreshing and rather encouraging to see game designers hold back the release of a game until it's the way



Even though you betrayed the Colonel long ago, he's remained an important influence on your career, such as it is.

they want it, even at the expense of considerable criticism for doing so. All this is by way of saying that Access' long-awaited *Under a Killing Moon* really is more than worth the wait.

This is our third visit with down-and-out gumshoe Tex Murphy, although a few years — and most of Tex's optimism — have come and gone since we last saw him in *Martian Memorandum*. That and the original Tex Murphy adventure, *Mean Streets*, were set mostly in a radiation-ravaged, post-holocaust San Francisco where much of the populace had mutated into what could be considered, in many cases, only peripherally human. But normal or mutant, criminals never take a holiday — which is why Tex is back on the job. And naturally, he's once again on a case in which the fate of the human race hangs in the balance. Only he doesn't know that... yet.

With the bill collectors practically beating down his door, Tex takes on a seemingly simple pawn shop-robbery. It's a quick job, but your success in solving it leads to another job, one with more frightening implications. The intrigue involves an old acquaintance from Tex's previous adventure, Lowell Percival; a rather nebulous but nonetheless feared political organization known as the Crusade; and a mysterious, shape-shifting henchman, the Chameleon, who dogs your every step.

As before, your primary tool is questioning, plus some keen observation. Although much has changed in appearance, the old interface remains, at least in spirit. You have a list of people and things to investigate and it's this list, or at least the pertinent parts of it, that you go over with each person you question. Every time you learn something new, it's added to the list. And if this new knowledge comes with an address, that's noted on your travel map. Along the way you pick up items that may, or may not, help you with your mission. Although there are few overt red herrings, some items — even the ones that are very difficult to obtain — have no real use.

Of course, the big story with *Under a Killing Moon* has been its star-studded cast and its film-like design execution. To be sure, the stars — Brian Keith, Margot Kidder, and Russell Means — are effective, especially Means as the enigmatic Chameleon. And the voice-overs by James Earl Jones lend a real epic quality to the proceedings. But curiously, the most effective actor is a non-star (and one of the game's designers): Chris Jones, as Tex Murphy. His narration comes across as some bizarre recombination experiment involving Mickey Spillane and Daniel Stern, voice of *The Wonder Years*. The other actors, many of them members of the Access staff, acquit themselves well for the most part, although a couple of performances might be considered well over the top.

The secondary characters are always a highlight of any Tex Murphy adventure, and *Under a Killing Moon* does not disappoint here, either. With a population featuring a lot of mutants, the game designers had wide latitude for experimentation. So while the mutated Chelsee is disappointingly normal looking — although guessing what her mutation is could be a game with-



The first order of business is to check out Tex's office, but remember, hidden items aren't magically found by the cursor. You have to *look*.



Chelsee's a good source for info at the beginning of the game, but she can't tell you much after you've found the jade.

It's Not Just a Job. It's an Adventure.

Tex Murphy's been through a lot since we first met him in *Mean Streets*. As we've seen, his life has mostly been a series of long periods of idleness, punctuated by the occasional bankruptcy filing or sale of some of his 80-proof blood. In *Under a Killing Moon*, however, things heat up considerably for our Tex, to the point where he's considering a return to his old vocation as a dance instructor.



If there's one thing you don't want to do, it's ask Tex about his ex-wife. You'll hear a sob story that'll rip your heart out.



Bet you didn't know there was a tuneful side to Tex. He still can't get Lou to turn the Brew & Stew into a piano bar, though.



Here's a lesson for us all — always take along a friend, or a .357 Magnum, for those late-night constitutionals.



Tex Murphy, Private Detective, Defender of Humanity, and GQ's Man of the Year.



There's not much left to find in this abandoned warehouse, unless you're an experienced private dick like Tex. Yeah, right.



The GRS offices will yield important items and info, if you can figure out how to avoid the security robot. Perhaps your height is a disadvantage?

in the game — informant Beek Nariz or cafe owner Lou are wonderfully bizarre. The neat joke in *Under a Killing Moon* is that the so-called normals, such as the eminently gross Ferrel Pus, are more disgusting and degenerate than the mutants they're always railing against.

The term "interactive movie" has been so overused as to be laughable, but for once a game deserves the appellation. You exist in a true virtual world, where the game doesn't end at the top or the bottom of the screen; you've got to look up and down, around corners, and all the other things you'd have to do if investigating a real room. The virtual illusion is so compelling that it lets you overlook the relatively small viewing area. The view can be increased to as large as full-screen for the movement mode, but at the expense of video smoothness. So while going to a full screen may be a bit easier on the eyes, the jumpiness of the slow frame rate may upset the stomach.

The sounds in *Under a Killing Moon* are great, from the crisply recorded dialogue to the evocative musical soundtrack with its requisite wailing sax. You should, however, have a 16-bit sound board to get the most from Access' efforts.



Eddie Ching's something of a surprise, but don't underestimate her or her goons. Play along and you'll get some essential info.

You may find yourself reeling from an attack of nostalgia the first time the game asks you to insert another disc. Yes, there are indeed four — count 'em, *four* — discs that need to be swapped from time to time. It's not all that intrusive, however, and you may enjoy being reminded of those days when a high-end PC had *two* 360K floppy drives and no hard drive.

Under a Killing Moon delivers. We've waited quite a while for the finished product, but it was worth it. This is one game where you can really see the effort that has gone into it, even though nothing jumps out as self-serving grandstanding. I was entranced from the very opening screen, and it's a better than even bet you will be, too.

— *Gary Meredith*



The Chameleon is a formidable foe, but he can be beat if you can take advantage of his one weakness. Just think of the Surgeon General.

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

92%

HIGHS: Truly interactive video with great characters, script, and puzzles.

LOWS: Low frame rates for slower computers and all-but-forgotten art of disc swapping.

BOTTOM LINE: Worth waiting for, it's a game that challenges *and* entertains, and leaves you wanting more of this believable virtual world.

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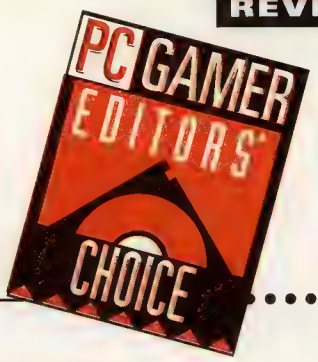
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System Shock



Category: First-person roleplaying
Developer: Looking Glass
Publisher: Origin Systems 12940 Research Blvd. Austin, TX 78750
(800) 245-4525

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
486/33; 4MB RAM; 35MB hard-drive space; MS-DOS 5.0 or higher; Mouse.	Pentium; 8MB RAM; Supported sound cards (especially cool on the Gravis Ultrasound); General MIDI

M.S.R.P.: $79.95

Every element comes together to make this one of the most exciting, innovative games of the year.

It is 2072. Something has happened in the Citadel, a high-tech orbital research facility. First, the SHODAN computer security system begins malfunctioning almost immediately after its installation. Then, scientists are infected by a viral mutation agent (mutagen), and the culprit seems to be faulty computer software. Robots and computer systems go inexplicably haywire. Infected researchers begin showing psychopathic tendencies, and start dying. Riots begin erupting throughout the base. When a military transport is sent to sort things out, the space station's defense weapons destroy it.

A short time later, SHODAN announces its intention to control all life aboard the Citadel. Robots take over the station and start slaughtering the human inhabitants. A brief message from some survivors state that Earth is in danger from SHODAN, then all contact stops. The massacre of the Citadel's crew appears complete.

But SHODAN missed one person. It all began when you tried to hack into the Citadel's computers. When you were discovered, corrupt vice-president Edward Diego offered you an alternative to going to jail: If you can hack him into SHODAN, he'll give you your freedom — and toss in a neural implant to boot. You keep up your part of the bargain, he keeps his, and for the last six months you've been in a healing coma on the Citadel, recovering from the neural implant surgery. You awake in the hospital, ready to make up for lost time — but you discover a scene of total carnage.

Welcome to *System Shock* — and get ready for the ride of your life. Simply put, there has never been anything like it. It is a complete evocation of a hellish future world, where you are part man and part machine. As the only human left on the Citadel, you must hunt and kill the mutants and robots, disable SHODAN's security, and unravel its plans and secrets.

At first, all you have to protect yourself is a metal bar, but you soon pick up all manner of high-tech weapons. Slowly, you piece together the last days and hours of the Citadel by reading the e-mail of the final survivors. In order to progress through the eight levels of the Citadel, you have to get past locked doors by solving puzzles, killing almost anything that moves, picking up more neural enhancements, and, in the game's most unique segment, exploring Cyberspace.

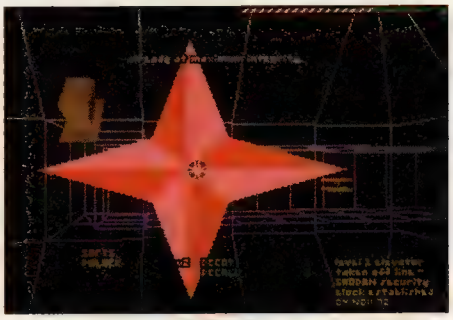


The Citadel: Could this turn out to be site of humanity's last stand?

The implant provides you with a view enhanced by bio-monitors, multi-function displays, energy and health indicators, and numerous attachments that allow you to jack into cyberspace, map the base, auto-read electronic messages and logs, and generally start kicking ass and taking down names. As you go along you find other attachments: some give you a 360-degree view of your surroundings, others enhance your vision, and so on.



You're about to be in a world o' hurt. Maybe you should have left that door closed after all...



In Cyberspace, only SHODAN can hear you scream.

On each level, you can jack into the computers and explore SHODAN's world. Unlike the 3D texture maps of the rest of the game, the Cyberspace sequences are composed of simple polygons, resembling nothing so much as *Spectre VR*. Once you're in, you have a limited amount of time to explore Cyberspace, pick up various types of software to help you out, throw switches to unlock doors in the "real world," and generally harass SHODAN and thwart his plans. Spend too much time inside Cyberspace, and SHODAN will track you down and eject you — forcibly, and painfully.

System Shock smokes. It is the most fully immersive game world I have ever experienced. Not since Looking Glass's last big hits for Origin

"*System Shock* smokes. Its the most fully immersive experience I've ever seen on a PC. Not since Looking Glass's last big hits for Origin — *Ultima Underworld I and II* — have I felt this much *inside* a game world"



This assassin 'bot looks more deadly than he is. He's really just a pussycat.

Systems — *Ultima Underworld I* and *II* — have I felt this much *inside* a game world, and so involved with the action.

The excellent game controls allow you to move in any direction at a variety of speeds. You can jump, crouch, crawl on your stomach, look all the way up or down, and lean to either side. And these are more than gimmicks: Certain spots can only be reached by crawling on your belly, and you can use a wall for cover while you lean to one side and fire on an enemy.

Monitors track your health, vital signs, and power levels, and new and more complex enhancements can be plugged into your neural implant to help you in your quest. The graphics, though often dark, are nicely done, and there's a wide range of locations and creatures. Every level is full of rooms, hidden passageways, and tight places to discover and explore. Mutants charge out of the shadows, assassin robots stalk quietly through the corridors, and security drones emerge around every corner.

Hovering over it all is the godlike presence of SHODAN, who looks like a creature from H.R. Giger's paintings. SHODAN ignores you at first, but when you destroy a crucial security station, he begins stalking you in earnest, and his rage knows no bounds.

The atmosphere is thick with danger and despair. You pick up logs and e-mails from the last survivors, who made a valiant and tragic stand against SHODAN. Their final messages are scrawled in blood on the walls; their mutilated corpses litter the floors.

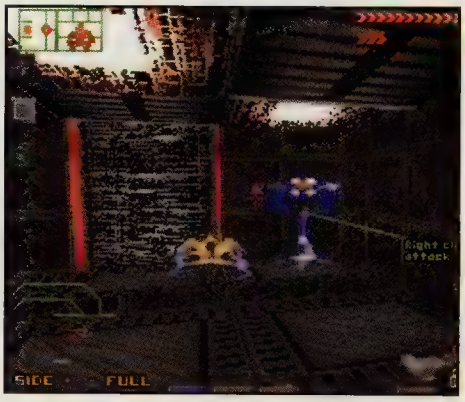


A mutant buys the farm. Don't feel bad — he deserved it.

Weapons, ammo, health packs, grenades, mines, and all manner of objects can be found on each of the eight levels. You have to solve puzzles to get through certain doors, and slowly chip away at SHODAN's security systems in order to erode its iron grip on the station.

There's so much that's unique and entertaining in *System Shock* that it's hard to know where to begin. The game world is stark and fully-developed, and the story consistently intrigues. Sound effects are dense and effective, and the pounding, ominous music provides just the right atmosphere. Numerous configuration settings mean you can set the game for as much or as little combat as you desire, make the story more elaborate, or increase the difficulty of puzzles. There are so many options that no matter what kind of game you're looking for, you'll find something in *System Shock* to delight you. This is an exciting, entertaining, wholly unique game, so fully realized in all its diverse aspects and so completely immersive that it unquestionably raises computer gaming to a new level.

— T. Liam McDonald



A whole peck of 'bots greets you at the end of a tunnel crawl. Get the hopper first.

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

96%

HIGHS: The most astonishing movement control in any game anywhere ever.

LOWS: Some of the puzzles aren't very inspired; *steep* system requirements.

BOTTOM LINE: One of the finest, best-executed, and most enjoyable first-person RPG shooters ever. A landmark achievement.

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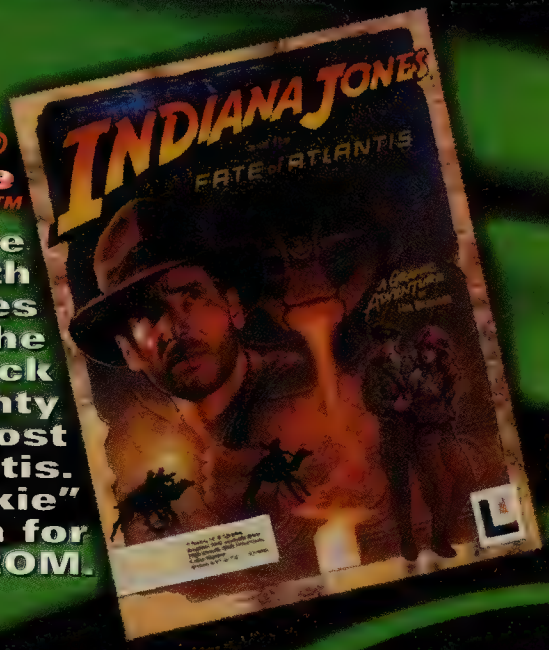
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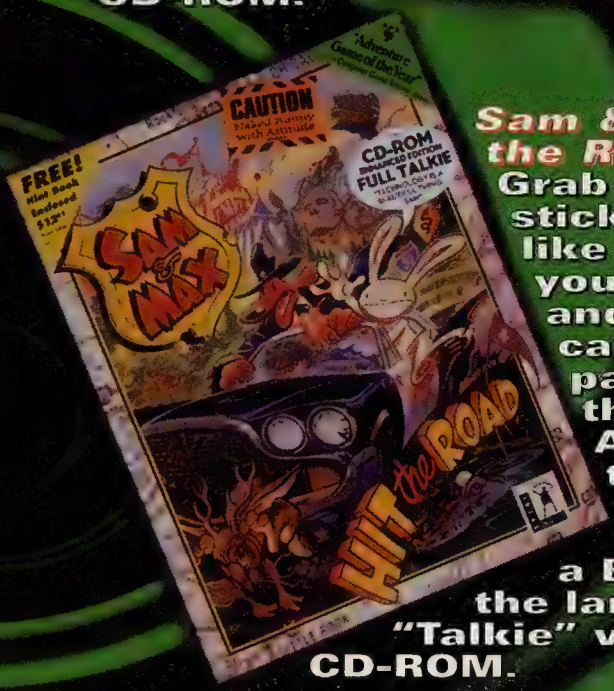


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5th Fleet

Category: Naval simulation
Developer: Stanley Associates
Publisher: Avalon Hill, 4517 Harford Rd., Baltimore, MD., 21214
(410) 254-9200

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386SX; 2MB RAM; Hard-drive installation; VGA; Mouse	486/25MHz; 4MB RAM; Supported sound cards

M.S.R.P.: $69.95

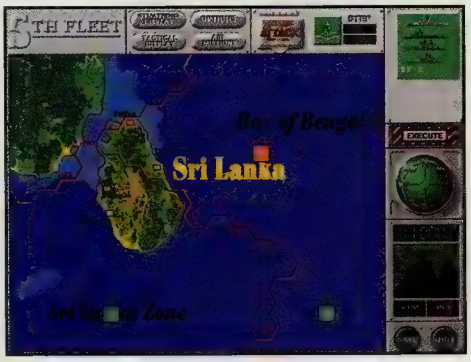
Have you wanted to try a naval warfare sim, but were frightened off by the complexity of *Harpoon*? Then here's some good new for you.

One of the things that irritates me about certain roleplaying games is the stupid requirement that the player's party of adventurers "unsheathe" or "draw" weapons when combat is imminent; failure to do so may result in annihilation, if you've forgotten to "save" as well as "draw." Just seems to me that *some* things, in the interest of plausibility, should be taken for granted.

The same thing applies to complex, high-tech military sims: there are occasions when micro-management is richly satisfying in and of itself. But sometimes you're in a gameplaying mood where the only thing you want to do is jump in and start lobbing missiles, without having to mess with such *Harpoon*-ish details as remembering to cut on each and every radar and sensor system. And for that kind of cut-to-the-chase gaming experience, *5th Fleet* is the perfect delivery system.

Let no one dismiss *5th Fleet* as some kind of "*Harpoon Lite*" also-ran product. In its board-game format, it's a time-tested, highly refined, and widely loved simulation, with a legion of fans who've learned many lessons about contemporary naval warfare from the thing, while enjoying hours of exciting gameplay in the process.

Avalon Hill's new PC edition of *5th Fleet* strikes me as one of the finest board-game conversions I've ever seen. The whole game sparkles with crisp, colorful graphics, and boasts one of the *cleanest* interfaces on the market. Joe Balkoski, designer of the original board game classic, worked closely with project leader Mike Inella, whose Stanley Associates team included veterans with a lot of experience developing software for the military. Everyone concerned wanted to get it right, and it shows.



Even with all the weapons at your disposal, the best anti-submarine weapon is still another submarine.

The action takes place in the vast and volatile region bounded on the west by the Gulf of Suez and the Horn of Africa, and on the east by Malaysia. Along with the Indian Ocean, this theater of war also includes all the vital Mid Eastern waterways and strategic choke-points.

Eleven scenarios are included, all predicated on the supposition that large segments of the former Soviet Navy become engaged with various client-states in this unstable region. Thus, in addition to the familiar old USSR vessels, the player may find himself confronting Indonesian, Pakistani, or Indian units. Scenarios are graded as to complexity: a low-rated game usually lasts an hour, a medium-rated one lasts two or three hours, and there's a monster campaign game of 30 turns which includes the possibility of replenishing depleted missile inventories at friendly bases. Starting locations are randomized for each game, so replay value is much higher than "eleven scenarios" might lead you to think.

Each game is controlled from a "CIC" screen, where you can select scenarios, configure the game for two-person or E-mail play, and consult the Tactical Reference Monitor, a handy Janes-Fighting-Ships guide that shows a crisp picture of every ship or plane in the game, along with their real-life vital statistics and their ratings in terms of the simulation.

Overall battle management is conducted from a strategic map based on satellite reconnaissance data. You can display all known sightings, by type, and vector recon flights to the various tactical zones displayed. When an enemy unit is detected by your sensors, it's displayed along with whatever information is available about the individual ships in that formation.

Tactical action is fought out on richly detailed operational displays, whose hex-grids can be toggled on and off. Each hex represents 50 miles, and the air, sub, and surface unit icons look exactly like their board-game counterparts.

Movement is simple. You just click on the unit you want to maneuver and drag the mouse to the destination hex. Combat is also easy to initiate: click on the unit you want to strike with, whether naval or air, toggle the "attack" button, then click on the enemy unit you've targeted. A combat display screen will then pop on, and each weapon system that's capable of hitting a selected enemy target will be highlighted, along with the number of missiles or torpedoes available for firing. Using this well-designed screen, it's a simple matter to cycle through your ships and assign to them the targets they're most likely to hit.

Animated missiles, aircraft, and explosions add a bit of graphic zip to the combat routines, after which a score screen appears telling you how many of your SSNs hit or missed. Victory points are awarded for sinkings (though not, rather curiously, for damage inflicted) and for convoys brought safely to their objectives.

I was seduced by *5th Fleet*'s clarity, elegance, and energy. But the more I played, the more I came to respect the way it subsumes an *enormous* amount of data into such a playable engine, and then slowly reveals the subtleties implicit in that database through the growing experience of the individual player.

After the first time one of your task forces is gutted by a submarine you didn't know about, you'll learn the value of mixing into your CAP deterrent a few planes with high "sub detect" ratings. After grooving on the rush of launching a veritable rain of



Scenarios cover a wide range of operations, from convoy escort to all-out confrontations between entire task forces.

SSNs on the first tempting target in range, and then finding yourself, two turns later, out of Harpoons and cornered by a fresh enemy task force, you'll learn that, for all their lethality, surface-to-surface missiles can only be carried in *limited* numbers — and the admiral who fires them off as though they were five-inch shells is not likely to survive.



The Tactical Reference Screens is invaluable. It provides full data on every platform in the game, including its values in the simulation.

You'll learn to horde the arrows in your quiver; the importance of using range limitations to your advantage; the weaknesses and strengths of ground-based air support; the crucial importance of locating the enemy before he locates you; and the shocking suddenness with which a seeming victory can turn into a crushing defeat.



Colorful summary screens like this one show the results of each combat phase.

Certainly the best way to play *5th Fleet* is against a human opponent, either in the flesh or by E-mail, but the computer AI fights a very competent battle. If you set the AI on "aggressive," you'll probably experience a significantly wilder battle than on the "nominal" setting — indeed, the "aggressive" computer admiral tends to attack furiously, hoping to score a knockout early on. If you can survive his onslaught with sufficient units intact, you can probably slaughter him with counterattacks, because he will have burned up most of his magazines.

This handsome, engrossing PC version will certainly satisfy the many fans *5th Fleet* has gained as a board game. Naval enthusiasts who just aren't in the mood for *Harpoon*'s complexities, or who are looking for a naval-war game that can be started and finished in a single evening, will find it a delight. Well done.

— William R. Trotter

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

85%

HIGHS: Ease of play masks the depth of authentic data in this game. Exciting scenarios, crisp graphics.

LOWS: Lovers of high-tech micro-management, a la *Harpoon*, may find it too streamlined.

BOTTOM LINE: An elegant conversion of a board-gaming classic; a must-have for fans of naval war who relish action above all other elements.

Q.Q.P.'s
QUOTING THE QUOTES

****THE GRANDEST FLEET****

"The Grandest Fleet is a fun game, and one that should live a good long life on many gamer's hard drives."

-M. Evan Brooks, *Computer Gaming World*

"This game (The Grandest Fleet) is hot and QQP deserves to reap what it has sown."

-Ted, *Computer Game Review*

"...it's relatively easy to get into, thanks to a well-designed interface. And once you are into it, you'll have a hard time stopping."

-William Trotter, PC Gamer

"This is what great gaming is all about."

-M. Evan Brooks, *Computer Gaming World*

"The Grandest Fleet is a fascinating little world of its own, and one definitely worth exploring."

-Dennis Lynch, *Chicago Tribune*

****BRIDGE OLYMPIAD****

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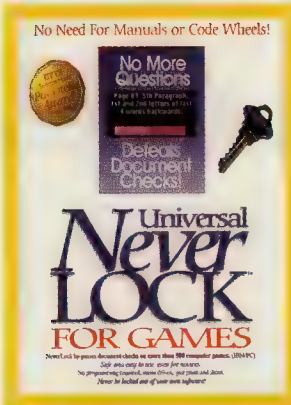
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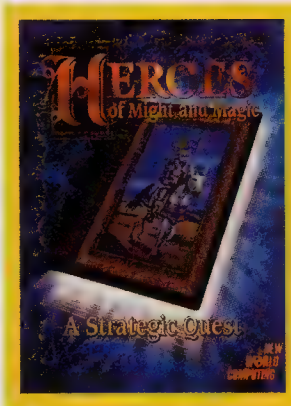
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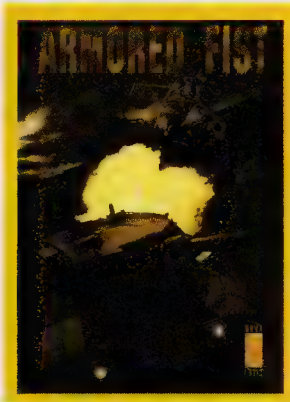
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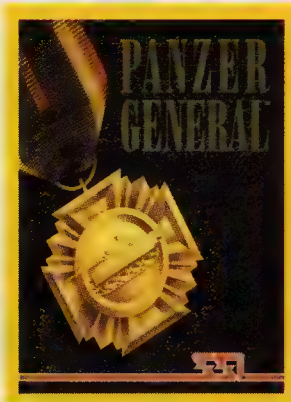
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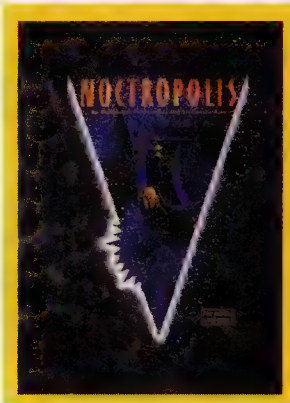
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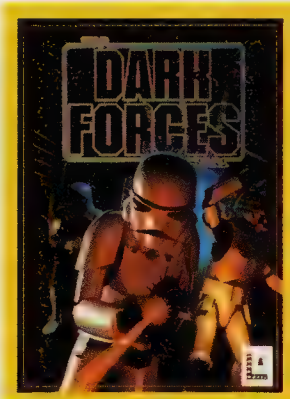
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Love Bites CD	$26
Mystique of Orient 2 CD	$24
Secrets CD	$24
Wickd Q-Tm Movie CD	$39

Product Information Number 94

DOMINUS

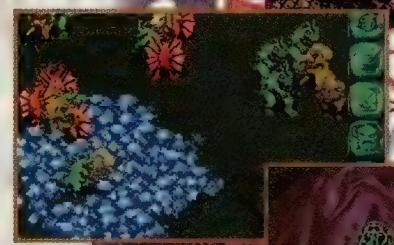
YOU'LL NEVER PLAY THIS GAME AGAIN!

THE NEW STRATEGY GAME THAT'S DIFFERENT EVERY TIME YOU PLAY.

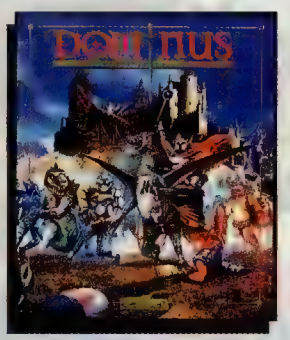
Dominus is a new genre of strategic war game. A real time simulation that blends the best elements of fantasy role playing and hand to hand combat, Dominus allows you to stand back and run the war from above, or grab a weapon and join the fray. So you can fight the way you want. And with 7 difficulty levels, Dominus is fun for first-time players and war game veterans alike. Defend your domain from invading clans by deploying monsters, casting spells, setting traps, capturing your enemies and interrogating them in the dungeon. Then combine your helpless prisoners with your hideous monsters to create your own more powerful hybrids. Each of your decisions causes different strategies and reactions in your enemies, so every game is unique. Grab your sword and leap into Dominus.











It's a cut above, a step beyond, and a world apart. **Are you ready for Dominus?**

Available for IBM PC [illegible] Disk and [illegible] PC CD-ROM

U.S. GOLD

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Product Information Number 151

Iron Cross

Category:Wargame
Developer: New World Computing
Publisher: New World Computing, PO Box 4302, Hollywood, CA 90078
(818) 889-5650

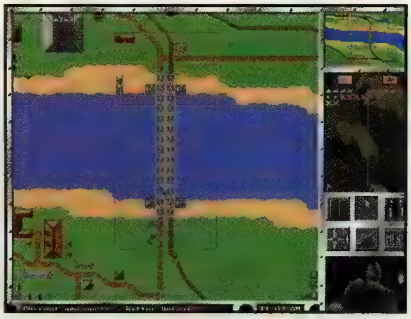
REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386SX; 4MB RAM; 10MB hard-drive space; MS-DOS 5.0 or greater; SVGA; Mouse	486/33MHz; Supported sound cards; at least 12 MB hard-drive space

M.S.R.P.: $40-$60

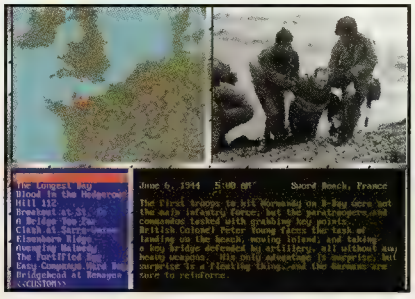
When you get the urge to beat up on a bunch of Nazis — and who doesn't? — *Iron Cross* will at least let you give it a try.

Iron Cross is a World War II tactical warfare simulation from New World Computing, a company more famous for its Might & Magic fantasy role-playing games than for war games. And while *Might & Von Manstein* it ain't, *Iron Cross* could certainly do with a little bit more reality.

Iron Cross bills itself as a simulation, claiming on the box that "each scenario is an accurate depiction of the actual battle; every detail is carefully recreated, from the town layouts and surrounding terrain to the type of units and number of airstrikes available at the time." The truth is that *Iron Cross* bears little resemblance to reality. It's a real-time version of *The Perfect General*, only masquerading as a historical wargame.



Here is the famous Bridge at Remagen. This is one of the tougher scenarios to crack.



A dozen scenarios greets the prospective general. Game play is much more balanced when the human player is the attacker.

The game is a glossy one, with lots of good graphics, flashy sounds, and digitized speech. The introduction is pleasing to watch, the maps look good, and the interface is easy to use. In the eye- and ear-candy department, it can only be complimented.

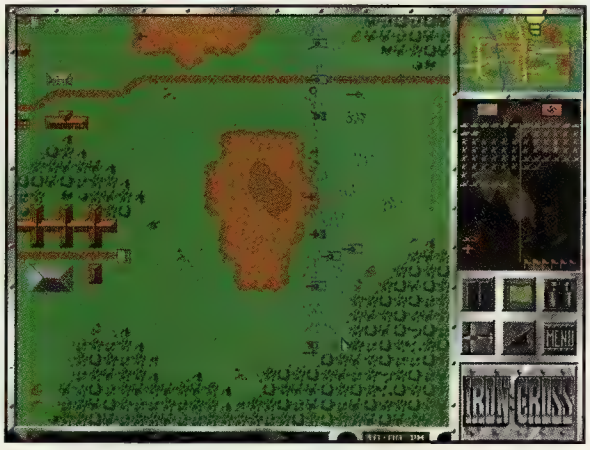
The problems come as you get into the gameplay. When it only takes 11 pages of an 82-page manual to explain how to play the game, you know something fishy is going on.

The manual, by the way, is one of the sloppiest I've ever seen, containing such an incredible number of glitches and historical errors that you almost wonder if they did it on purpose, to see who was reading it. In case you didn't know, for instance, the Americans had all-Black armored divisions "with a special grudge against Hitler's master race." According to the manual, Major General Maxwell Taylor commanded the 506th Division — not bad, considering that the United States essentially raised only about a hundred divisions. American brigadier generals are routinely referred to as "brigadiers," a British designation. This sort of carelessness extends itself to other areas: The box says that the game takes up ten megabytes on your hard drive, while the installation guide says it wants 22 megabytes (luckily, the real number is a bit over ten).



Step right up and buy your bazookas for the chosen scenario. You have a wide array of choices, usually more than your historical counterpart.

But back to gameplay. You move your units and fire, and that's essentially it; after "buying" units before a scenario and placing them, you have relatively few choices. You can direct your units to move to certain places, you can change their "mode" (from move only to move/attack to attack/move to attack only), then select targets for them. Airstrikes can also be called down (amazingly, they appear within 30 seconds, a response time that bears absolutely no relationship to real life). Because the game plays out in "real time," sometimes you'll find yourself pumping your mouse as if you were playing an arcade game. And unfortunately, there's no feature to select or give orders to more than one unit at a time.



Here, a heapin' helpin' of Americans get ready to show the Germans a little inhospitality.

Your units move on their own, little squads of men looking like tiny dust mites scrambling across your screen. Their artificial intelligence leaves a lot to be desired, though, as they



Artillery is indeed the queen of battles. Here, artillery rounds bursting in a field destroy enemy tanks. If only it were so easy....

choose poor routes and get "stuck" behind buildings or other objects (the computer is a much better defender than attacker, something to keep in mind if you want a challenge). For some reason, the computer player likes to send tanks into the woods, where they get mired. Squads can't entrench, or change their speed, or lay smoke, or any of a number of things that a player might expect them to be able to do. Moreover, the game mechanics are sometimes questionable: I once had three squads firing from point-blank range at a piece of exposed artillery for quite a while before I was able to destroy it. That artillery crew must have been especially adept at dodging bullets!

You begin to understand the nature of the simulation you're dealing with here when the Omaha beach scenario opens with the invading Americans facing a bunch of German armored vehicles on the top of a hill opposite the beach. No emplaced positions, no casemates, — just AFV's out in the open in broad daylight (there are no weather or visibility variables in *Iron Cross*). In real life they would have been destroyed by fighter-bombers before the Americans even hit the beaches.

Iron Cross comes with 12 scenarios and a "customize" scenario. All of the scenarios, by the way, involve only the British, Americans, and Germans from June 1944 to March 1945; there are no Soviets, or Eastern Front action. Victory conditions for the scenarios are strictly geographical: If you control certain "zones" at the end of the scenario, you win. If your casualties are light, your victory will be greater. And the game is strictly solitaire, just you against the computer. No two-player mode, modem play, or network play. There's not even support for multiple saved games.

The game's many quirks and flaws would be forgivable if *Iron Cross* were a lot of fun to play. And actually, the game isn't usually boring. But the replayability factor isn't particularly high, although the fact that the scenarios are short and sweet does help some. The customize scenario offers a few more options than the pre-built scenarios, but there's not really that much to customize (a map editor would have been nice, as would a unit editor). So after you're through enjoying the graphics and sound, and have played each scenario once or twice, *Iron Cross* is likely to start gathering dust on your bookshelf. Just make sure you don't put it on the shelf where you keep your history books, or there could be a brawl.

— Mark Pitcavage

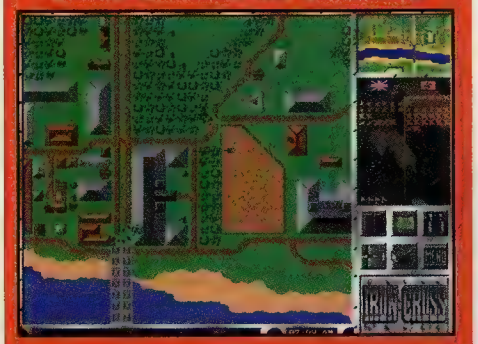


The graphic for an American defeat is a rather questionable photograph of a crushed body.



Congratulations! A solid victory will promote your officer.

Iron Cross in Action



In this screen shot from the Arnhem scenario, the British (human) player has things well in hand. The tally sheet to the right shows that the Germans have already taken considerable casualties, and the British still hold all four of their victory areas. There's a German tank in the field on the left side of the screen, and a German squad behind it. Meanwhile, two German AFV's bear down from the north. The Brits have an anti-tank gun and plenty of men hidden in the woods to the east, but no troops in the north. They'll have to bring up some squads from the southern edge of Arnhem, near the river. Unlike their historical counterparts, it looks like these Germans are in big trouble.



The game rates your success by victory areas secured and casualties taken.

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

65%

HIGHS: Much more attractive than the real war.

LOWS: But then again, it doesn't have anything to do with the real war.

BOTTOM LINE: A lightweight combat game packaged as a tactical simulation. Not as fun as *The Perfect General*; wait for *Beyond Squad Leader* if you want realism.

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Volume II



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Stalingrad can be found in computer game stores near you. For order information, or for the name of a retailer near you, call Toll Free: 800-999-3222; ask for Dept. PCG 1.

Product Information Number 88

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Product Information Number 148

Litil Divil

CD-ROM

Category: Puzzle adventure
Developer: Gremlin
Publisher: Phillips Interactive, 11111 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025 (800) 340-7888

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
CD-ROM drive; MSCDEX 2.1 or later; 386; 4MB RAM; 2MB hard-drive space; DOS 5.0 or later; VGA	Double-speed CD-ROM drive; 486; Supported sound cards; Joystick

MSRP: $40.00-$60.00

If hell really turns out to be this playful and entertaining, people are gonna start doing anything they can think of to get in.

Litil Divil's star is easily the best thing about this game. His name is Mutt Divil (I call him Div), and he's been assigned the unenviable task of slogging through hell to reach the Overworld and bring back the Mystic Pizza of Plenty — presumably, a big pie with everything on it. But the whole pizza shtick is just a gimmick to get Div out into the world and ready for gaming.

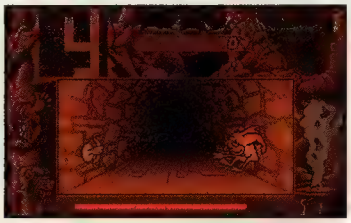
Litil Divil is a fairly large character, and his animations are well designed and distinctive. He growls and pounds his fist if you run him into a hole, he jumps as though someone were hauling him aloft by the base of his pointy tail, and if you don't keep him moving he falls asleep and dreams of a bikini-clad lady, or starts reading a book. He's such a likable fellow, in fact, that I'd love to see him in another adventure.

Not that there's much wrong with the game he's already in. *Litil Divil* has a number of varied gameplay elements, ranging from simple arcade sequences in which you have to get Div past obstacles and over hurdles as he makes his way through the hallways of hell (more on that later), to light combat and some tricky puzzle-solving. *Litil Divil* doesn't look like any other game, and there's enough here to keep you interested for quite awhile.

All these different elements are connected by a labyrinth of hallways leading to different rooms. The hallways themselves are pretty complex, and might even require you to do a bit of mapping. Then there's the matter of booby traps, things like fire-breathing masks and hidden spikes in the floor, that'll sap your strength and tap your lifebar. So while the hallways serve mainly to connect the rooms of the labyrinth, they do present their own gaming challenges.

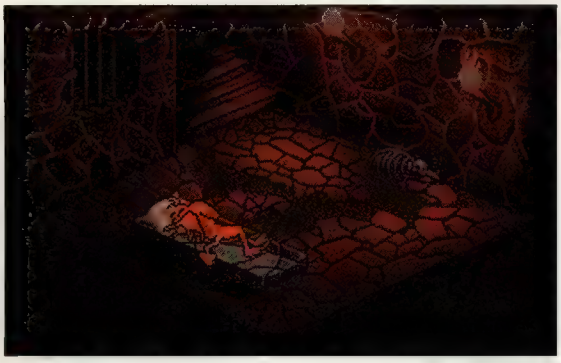


In the storeroom on each level, Div can purchase items that are necessary for him to get through some of the arcade sequences....



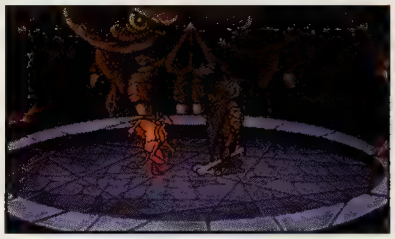
As you guide your Litil Divil through the hallways of each level, watch for booby traps. Here, our hero has been pinned to the wall by an arrow. *Ouch!*

You never know what Div will find in a room; sometimes it'll be a logic puzzle, while other times it might be an arcade sequence. Regardless of what it is, though, you'll have to work your way through it sooner or later — either to secure an object needed to get to the next level, or to clear the way to proceed through the labyrinth you're in. The variety of gaming styles is nice, but not quite endless. As you progress you'll see several themes repeated, but made more difficult in later levels.



There's a room in each level where Div can sleep and save his progress. Find it soon — it's the only way to save the game.

The sound and music accompanying Litil Divil through the underworld are great fun, and add immeasurably to the game's appeal. Div and the other characters sound almost comical, and the music reflects the game's generally cartoonish atmosphere. The tunes range from carnival-sounding ditties to dangerous (but not too dangerous) themes, and make a sound card a must for this title.



... And here's one of those arcade sequences! Litil Divil must beat that big goat-looking fellow in combat — and he can do it, too, if you've been to the store already.

Litil Divil isn't the kind of thing that'll appeal to everyone, though. For one thing, all that labyrinth-walking can get repetitive quickly. And the whole affair is pretty videogame-like, and not all PC gamers are into that kind of experience. Those who are, though, will find a lot more to like than dislike in *Litil Divil*.

— *Matt Firme*

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

86%

HIGHS: A great title character, varied gameplay, and nice graphics and sound.

LOWS: Meandering labyrinths can get tiring; some game elements are often repeated.

BOTTOM LINE: A great videogame-style experience. And you'll love that cute litil divil, despite what he may have done to end up in hell.

The Best...

"Interactive fiction doesn't get any better than this."
NewMedia

"A challenging, take-no-prisoners game."
Computer Gaming World

"The most innovative science fiction game we've seen on any system."
Dragon Magazine

"It rivals the most exciting movie or the most detailed strategy game."
Axcess

Invision –
Award of Excellence and Gold Medal, Best Animation and Graphics

Mac Computing –
Editor's Choice Award

SVM Mac –
Best Entertainment Title of the Year



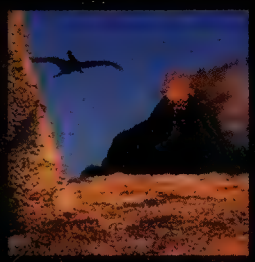
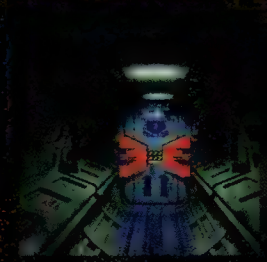
Gets Better!

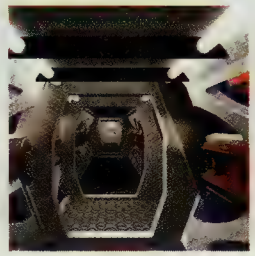
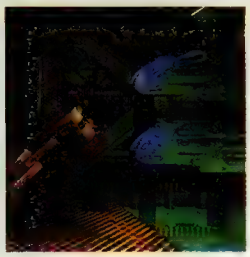
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Product Information Number 137

Master of Magic

Category: Strategy Roleplaying
Developer: Simtex Software
Publisher: Microprose 180 Lakefront Drive, Hunt Valley, MD 21030 (410) 771-1151

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386; 4MB RAM; MS-DOS 5.0 or later; VGA; Mouse	486; Supported sound cards

M.S.R.P.: $40-$60

This fantasy role-playing game, from the publishers of *Master of Orion*, gives you two worlds to conquer.

Take two parts *Civilization*, one part *Betrayal at Krondor*, and one part *Warlords*. Now add one eye of newt, and what do you get? OK, maybe you get an appointment with a shrink. But that recipe also cooks up an addictive new fantasy role-playing game from MicroProse.

Master of Magic, from the folks who hooked players with *Master of Orion*, puts you in the role of a wizard bent on conquering a dark, unknown world. You'll build your empire by establishing towns, raising armies, and enhancing your own magical powers. Of course, you aren't alone in this fantasy world: Other wizards are growing in power, too, and sooner or later your armies will clash. And don't forget the hordes of monsters that roam the countryside, disrupting your empire and taxing your precious troops.

Master of Magic actually gives you two worlds to conquer — Arcanus and Myrror. You start your adventure in Arcanus, the more "normal" of the two worlds. By discovering special towers or developing your own mighty wizardry, you'll eventually gain access to Myrror. There you'll find powerful new spells to build your power — and deadly new enemies, both real and magical.

The main game screen and the primary interface are very similar to those in *Civilization*. Starting with a single, tiny fortress, you must explore your continent, and eliminate or make peace with other wizards you may encounter. When you begin, the entire world is black and unknown; the terrain is revealed only as you explore it. And naturally, when you've conquered your continent, you'll want to build ships to plunder and pillage other realms across the ocean.



Your world is revealed only when you explore it. When you've conquered this continent, it's time to build a ship to find another to explore and plunder.

Building up your cities is a big part of the game. You choose the buildings to construct in your city, and they each contribute to your power and wealth in different ways. Building a stable, for instance, allows you to create cavalry units. A granary will help ensure your food supply, and fighter's guilds will produce better soldiers. You can't afford to ignore your city's economy, either. A marketplace will increase production, while a sawmill will increase income from nearby forests.

Cities are your centers of production, and therein lies the key to a successful empire. But even powerful wizards have to take care of mundane details if they want to rule the world. Outposts must be established, roads must be built, and taxes must be collected. You have to raise armies, feed them, and pay their wages. If there isn't enough food or money to go around, your armies will just vanish.

The overall emphasis of *MOM* is definitely on strategy, and the decisions you make when creating or choosing your wizard persona at the beginning of the game have a profound impact on how you'll fare down the road, as well as on the strategies you'll employ as you play. You can choose one of the wizards provided to represent you, or create your own. Then you select from 18 special skills, such as warlord (you get better troops) or famous (you attract more heroes to join your armies). Choosing these skills costs you some of your 11 character creation points, so you have to balance what you want with what you can afford.

You'll want to save some of those character points for magic — probably (and appropriately) the most pervasive element in *Master of Magic*. There are 210 spells available, grouped into six spell books — life, death, chaos, nature, sorcery, and arcane. After picking your special skills, you spend the rest of your points by choosing as many spell books as you can afford. You'll only be able to accumulate spells in the books you choose, so it's obviously an important decision.



When heroes offer their services, hire them. These guys and gals can lead your armies to victory.



Check on the status of your diplomatic relations with rival wizards.

There's also an extensive military aspect to *MOM*. With more than 40 types of military units available — from simple swordsmen to catapults, cavalry, and archers — it takes time and patience to build your armies, and you'll want to plan carefully the make-up of your forces. As they prove themselves on the battlefield, soldiers move up through six experience levels, gaining greater combat skills at each level. And as your fame grows, you'll be approached by mercenaries and heroes offering their services — for a fee, of course.



You'll watch the buildings rise as your cities grow.

other wizards (though don't count on these rascals to honor treaties), declare war, offer tributes to appease aggressive wizards, or exchange spells with a rival.

All the information you'll need as you play is never more than a mouse-click or two away. You can easily access lists of cities and armies, graphs showing the relative power of your rival wizards, spell books, and a host of advisers to help you build your magical empire.

Looking for a fantasy game that blends action and strategy? *Master of Magic* just might put you under its spell.

When you clash with a rival wizard's soldiers or monsters, the game takes you straight to the battlefield, where the fight is depicted in micro-miniatures fashion. The combat graphics aren't as stunning as those in *Betrayal at Krondor*, but these battles involve whole armies, not small groups of adventurers.

Not all of your victories will come on the battlefield: *Master of Magic* has a strong diplomatic element as well. You can enter into strategic alliances with



This screen makes it easy to keep track of your armies, which eventually will be stationed around the world.



Choose your next construction project. What's it gonna be — guns or butter?

bat — the graphics won't make you gasp in awe; soldiers move together, then wiggle their swords to signal a clash. It's no big deal. The magic is handled with a bit more flair, though — you'll see fireballs streak across the screen, and summoned creatures rise from the ground.

The sound effects are also a bit disappointing. In fact, there's just not much sound at all other than during combat. There's no speech, even when a rival wizard appears to greet or insult you.

And unfortunately, your opponents aren't very smart. In both the strategic mode and on the battlefield, the artificial intelligence is definitely lacking. Enemy units often won't move to block your advance on their city, and when they do, their battlefield tactics aren't too effective.

Finally, there's the weak, uninformative, and poorly organized game manual. For example, there's no index listing for "combat." Come to think of it, there aren't any listings at all under "C." And worse, there's no discussion of general strategies, or a description of the many and varied monsters you'll encounter. I can only assume that there's a strategy guide on the way, providing the important information that should have been included in the manual.

But despite these gripes, *Master of Magic* really is a keeper. It successfully combines the addictive play of *Civilization* with a strong dose of the supernatural. And an upcoming patch promises to improve the artificial intelligence and strengthen the diplomatic aspects of the game. If you're looking for a fantasy game packed with both action and strategy, *Master of Magic* might put you under its spell.

— *Lee Buchanan*

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Fantasy world has a vast array of races, spells, and combat units.

83%

LOWS: Uninspired sound. Graphics could be better and the artificial intelligence routines are sub-par.

BOTTOM LINE: A powerful mix of empire-building, wizardry, and combat.



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**** - PC PLAYER

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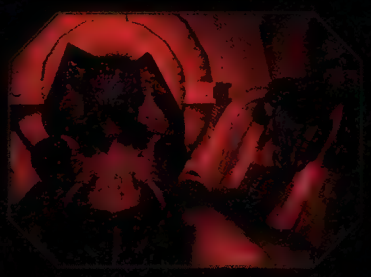
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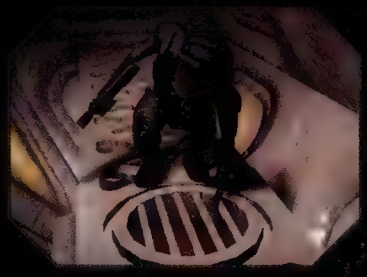
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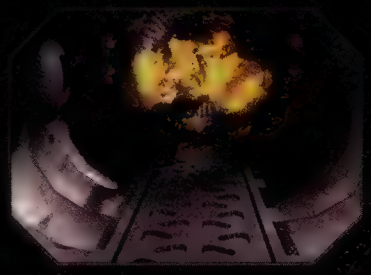
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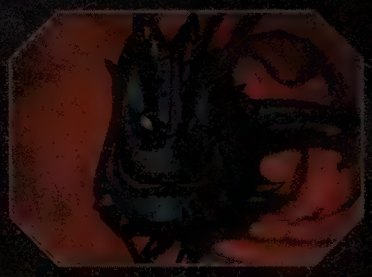
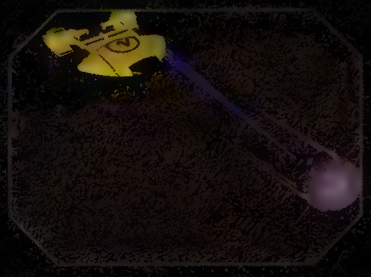


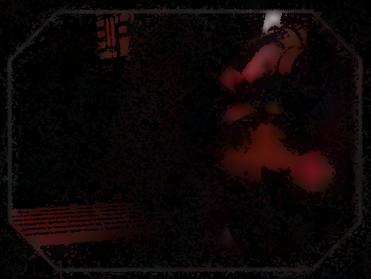
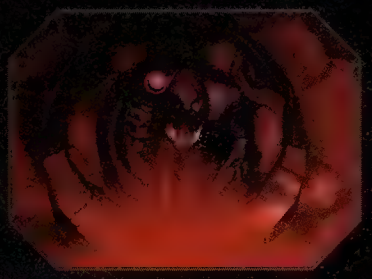




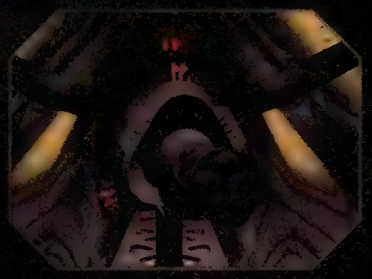
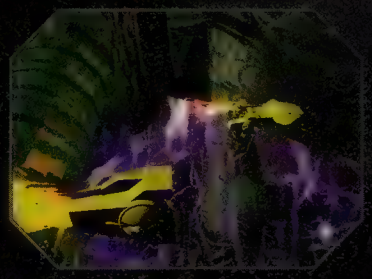
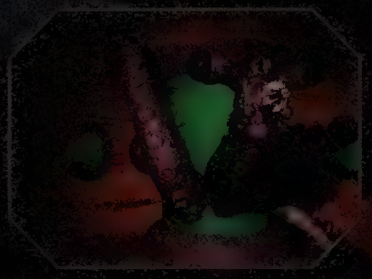
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Virgin

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Product Information Number 155

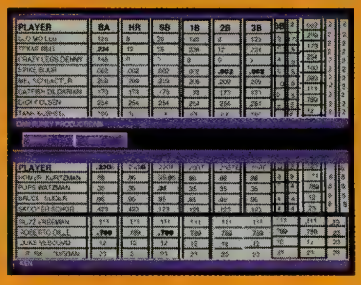
[ESPN BASEBALL TONIGHT]

versus

[The competition]



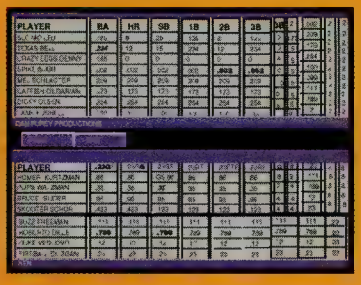
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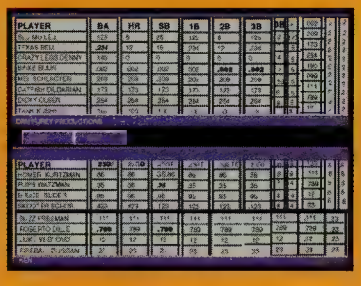
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Product Information Number 141

CD-ROM

Anyone For Cards? for Windows

Category:Card Game
Developer:Random Programming
Publisher: Capstone, 501 Brickell Key Drive, 6th Floor, Miami, FL 33131
(305) 373-3770

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
CD-ROM drive; 386/33; 4MB RAM; Windows 3.1 or later; 1MB hard-drive space; VGA; Mouse	Double-speed CD-ROM drive; 486; SVGA; Windows-compatible sound card

MSRP: $49.95

Anyone for Cards? offers a variety of games and opponents but lacks the innovative qualities you might expect from a CD-ROM.

was ready for a change. After ruining my retinas staring at the drab, green background of that Solitaire game bundled with Windows, I wanted more. *Anyone For Cards?* provided the variety I hoped would help save my eyesight.



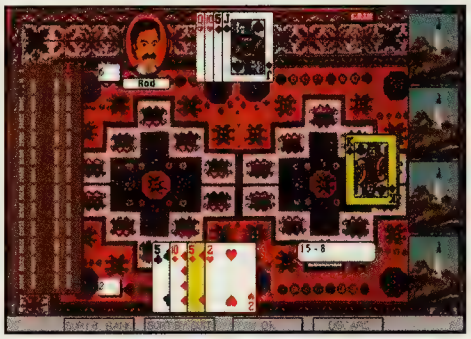
Unfortunately, you can't *hear* your opponents conversation; you just see their cartoonish speech balloons.

Yes, the green was gone. Following an opening sequence that might charitably be described as "cutesy," I found I could customize almost every aspect of the game. I now had a wide variety of multi-hued textures and pictures from which to choose. After customizing my desktop and picking a graphic for the back of the cards (the kittens were a favorite), I selected Music from the Options menu and had my choice of six different background tunes — which, although a little repetitive, helped to set the mood.

Now it was time to choose my game. *Anyone For Cards?* offers a variety of games, ranging from the popular to the obscure: Cribbage, Gin, Hearts, Spades, 31, 99, Whist, Pinochle, Oh Hell, George, Euchre, and Crazy Eights.

Instead of faceless opponents, *Anyone For Cards?* presents you with a choice of 18 characters, each with their own style of playing — although I was a little disappointed with these opponents. They resembled renegade toons from the ImagiNation Network, were poorly animated, and could only communicate through speech balloons. You'd expect more from a CD-ROM game — more animation, and certainly a bit more actual voice acting. If all you're after is a good game of cards, you'll probably find the characters annoying, and *wish* for some faceless AI. There's no modem or network support, which would be a natural for a game like this. So get used to those cartoon opponents.

With multiple-skill levels to choose from, you can set the game anywhere from relatively simple to moderately challenging. There's even a Practice Mode that reveals all of the cards each player holds. But lacking (and seemingly an obvious feature in a game like this) is a tutorial of some kind, to help you if you've never played a particular game before. Granted, the rules for the games are in the manual, as well as in the online help. But it would have been nice if you could choose one of the included characters to "teach" the rules of the game, by explaining them as a sample game is played.



Customize your tabletop as well as the back of the cards to give the game a more interesting look.



Choose your opponent from 18 characters — each with their own personality, skill level , and quirks.



The Practice Mode allows you to see the other players' cards to help you learn how to play.



***Anyone for Cards?* lets you choose from 11 card games — most of them well-known.**

Anyone for Cards isn't a bad game; it does what it sets out to do, and includes games you won't find in many packages. But it doesn't do as much as it could, and all the cute window-dressing will probably get tiresome if you're really serious about your cards.

— Daniel Craig

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

72%

HIGHS: A wide variety of card games to choose from, many not available in other Windows game packs.

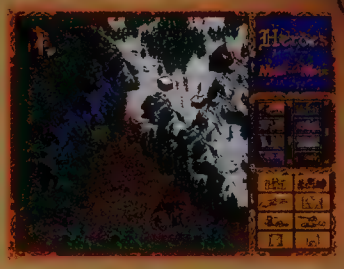
LOWS: The price seems a bit steep, considering the overall quality of the game.

BOTTOM LINE: A decent CD, if all you're after is the occasional game of cards.

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Product Information Number 123

DreamWeb

Category: Adventure
Developer: Creative Reality
Publisher: Empire, 4 Professional Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20879
[301] 916-9309

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386SX/16MHz; 580K free base memory (4MB RAM required for sound); 20MB hard-drive space; VGA; Mouse	386/33MHz; Supported sound cards

MSRP: $39.95

This endearing adventure lets you take control of the most murderous little guy in gaming — although he's a bit hard to see.



There's no hinting around about violence in *DreamWeb* — blast a couple bad guys, and a puddle of goo (and a few limbs) is all that's left.

The DreamWeb is a kind of collective consciousness that helps keep human society in check and running smoothly. But recently, the Web has been threatened by seven powerful, evil people who are attempting to take the thing over — and you, a normal guy, have been chosen by the DreamWeb's guardians to hunt down and kill the evil seven.

Yes, that's right: hunt down and kill. *DreamWeb* doesn't pull any punches as far as subject matter goes, and that's refreshing. Where some other games might have you battling evil in some kind of toe-to-toe, honorable, duel-to-the-death type encounter, *DreamWeb* has your character walking up to unarmed people, pulling a pistol, and coldly assassinating them.

When you think about it, the matter-of-fact way your little person goes about his business is a hell of a lot more realistic than the scenes in those predictable action movies, where the honorable hero always lets the bad guy get away rather than just shoot him in the back and be done with it.

Another nice thing about *DreamWeb* is the degree of interaction you're allowed with the people and objects in your environment. You can talk to any wino or thug you come across, and pick up every little piece of trash, every hairbrush and empty Coke you see, and even pop them in your inventory and carry them around. In fact, there are very few objects that can't be examined, picked up, or moved — just like in real life. Again, a refreshing touch.

Of course, very few of those objects will actually help you through the game; the rest aren't so much red herrings as they are diversions. This can be pretty frustrating to adventure gamers used to titles that it *only* let you take things you'll need, and requires some getting used to. I spent my first hour of gameplay in the very first room in the game, just taking objects, examining them, and stuffing them into inventory. As it turned out later, only two or three of them were of any use whatsoever.

For the most part, though, the gameplay and puzzle-solving in *DreamWeb* is pretty straightforward. This isn't the easiest game you've ever played, but it's probably not the toughest, either.

You view the action directly overhead, in a window that only takes up at most half of the screen. And that's a shame, because the world of *DreamWeb* is an interesting one, and deserves more exposure. One nice thing is a zoom window, inset to the left of the main view, that shows in close-up the tiny objects you're passing your cursor over. It's effective, but not as effective as a full-screen (and perhaps oblique) view of the action would have been.



The view window is pretty small, and unnecessarily so. A helpful touch, though, is that extra close-up window to the left of the main view — perfect for identifying objects.



You'll have to use computers quite a bit, and they're *not* DOS-based. Get used to those ancient Amiga commands, like READ and LIST.

DreamWeb doesn't have the graphic sophistication of today's better adventures, and you may wish there was a bit more depth to the characters and storyline. Still, it's an effective and interesting title, with good sound and music and a plotline that quickly draws you in. It's a violent, no-holds-barred adventure, and it moves along at a good pace — assuming you don't spend the whole day collecting empty Coke cans.

—Matt Firme

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

76%

HIGHS: A gritty story and style, and almost unlimited exploration.

LOWS: Tiny view window and graphics give the game a dated look; more depth would be nice.

BOTTOM LINE: An involving gameworld and premise. Not as polished as the best adventures, but definitely worth a look.

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Product Information Number 147

CD-ROM

Dark Sun: Wake of the Ravager

Category: Roleplaying
Developer: SSI Special Projects Team
Publisher: Strategic Simulations Inc., 675 Alamanor Avenue, Suite 201; Sunnyvale, CA 94086-2901; 800-245-4525

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
Double speed CD-ROM drive (350ms access time or better); 386/33MHz; 4MB RAM (620K bytes free conventional memory, 2MB free EMS or XMS); DOS 5.0 or higher; MSCDEX 2.2 or later; Uncompressed hard drive with 30MB free; VGA	486/33MHz; 8 MB RAM; Supported sound cards; Mouse

M.S.R.P.: $79.95

This second game in the Dark Sun series — and one of the last AD&D titles from SSI — is sure to please roleplayers everywhere.

Now *this* is what I call a depressing landscape.

No rainforests, no foliage, no ozone layer — wait a minute! Don't we automatically fry if we don't have an ozone layer?

No matter: it's depressing, this Athas — the world of the Dark Sun. Seems the mages of the past have sucked all the life out of the planet, caring nothing for trees or rivers or comfy places to splash your toes. And they did it all to feed their wicked little schemes of power unlimited.

Ain't no Greenpeace in Athas — at least none that did any good.



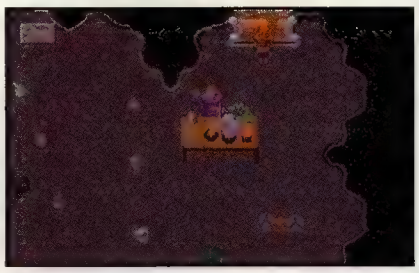
In a typical early scene, the party — represented by one character only — explores a room. Outside sits a beggar , whom you can query and even help.

Unless, of course, you're the start of it. Say, that's it: think of *Wake of the Ravager* as a roleplaying game in which *you* play Greenpeace, and maybe you'll be spurred into action without even trying. Can you bring back the rainforests, and the ozone layer, and maybe even the bunnies? Too bad this game doesn't offer a merge option with *SimEarth*. Now that would be something.

As it stands, SSI's latest foray into Advanced Dungeons and Dragons roleplaying is worth playing even if you don't get a chance to re-establish life on this barren planet. Anyone who enjoyed the first Dark Sun game, *Shattered Lands*, is sure to like this one because not a whole lot has changed. A few of the interface procedures are smoother, but the look and feel is very similar indeed. But hey, if it ain't broke....



Inside a building, your party encounters an NPC. Just click on your response, and the action continues. Oh, yeah: remember to flatter the guy.



The potion puzzle, early in the game. Pick up each item and put in on the scale in the lower right corner, to determine the order of adding ingredients to the pot.

And speaking of broke, if you read the gamers' sections on CompuServe, GEnie, et al, you'll find out that *Ravager* has a substantial number of bugs. Most, from what I can tell, apply to the CD-ROM version (the one I've been working with), and they seem to be related to all the sound and video material included in this version. All I can tell you is that my first copy didn't run very well at all, but my second one (SSI sent the replacement) hasn't caused me any problems at all so far. Then again, I haven't finished the thing yet.

Not finished? Nope. Just like you, I like my FRPs to take a long time. I like to try different things, including beginning the game with the party included with the package, and then switching to my own rank amateurs after I get the hang of it. I take zero advantage of the game cheats offered online, because the real fun in these things is playing them, not finishing them. Thankfully, *Ravager* repays this philosophy in spades. It's a long game, it offers a wide variety of options for both gameplay and character progress, and it's rarely boring. I suspect I'll be enjoying it for some time to come.

But a word of warning: This thing takes bazoongles of disk space, and makes incredible demands on system memory. I'm not sure about the floppy version, but the CD-ROM version, if you're using all the sound and cinematics, wants over 70 megabytes (!!!) of your hard drive.



The standard inventory screen lets you control every item you retrieve. Swords go in the hands boxes, belts on the waist box, and so on.

Even without sound and video it requires 30 megs — a lot for a CD-ROM title. Why? Because you can't play it directly from the CD-ROM (although you can tell it to install sound and cinematics only when needed) — and worse yet, the game doesn't like DoubleSpace or other disk compression software. C'mon, SSI (and other publishers, for that matter): not *all* of us have those nifty new 540-meg hard drives! Of course, delivering the required 620,000 bytes of free base memory would be about impossible anyway with both CD-ROM drivers and disk compression loaded....



The purchase system is fully integrated with the inventory system. Here, the vendor appears on the right with her goods, which you buy and transfer immediately to inventory.

As for the game itself, well, you'll know from the start how it plays. You begin with a battle, and I'm happy to say that (a) combat doesn't predominate, and (b) the battles play out quite quickly and easily. In combat, as in the rest of the game, just about everything is controlled with the mouse. You point at the item or baddie you're interested in, and you click the right mouse button repeatedly until you cycle to the action you have in mind. You can Walk (the default), Attack (either hand-to-hand or with ranged weapons), or Look.

The Look icon can be used on a person or creature to initiate a conversation or just to see what the thing is, as well as on an object to pick it up or use it. Click it on a chest, for instance, and the thing opens (if its not locked, of course), letting you take the items inside and move them to your inventory. It's slick, and since you're engaged in combat from the opening scene, you have no choice but to learn the system immediately. More playability stuff: If you want to do something that's impossible, the game doesn't even let you try. This even applies to spells, a real plus considering the tendency of many FRPs to make you expend spell points even though the spell can't possibly work.

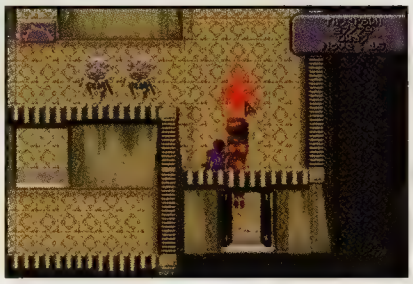


You don't always have to initiate conversation to learn things. Here, some simple eavesdropping gives you some very useful information.

Speaking of spells, *Ravager* has lots of 'em — and they're interesting enough to make you want to learn them all. I'm particularly enamored of Wall of Thorns, a 6th-level cleric spell that creates a cool-looking barrier, and Death Spell, a 6th-level preserver spell that nicely eliminates the need for combat tactics. But the game doesn't stop at spells; your characters can opt for psionics instead, which let you do really neat things like attack your target's Ego or Id. There is,



Finishing off the potion puzzles gained you lots of experience, and now you reap the rewards. This is how *Ravager* handles character advancement.



Combat! Your party now appears as all four individual members, and the selected target, a skeleton in this case, flashes red.

alas, nothing in the "destroy self-concept" line, probably because the educational psychologists would have the game permanently banned.

This is a good game. A very good game, in fact. The graphics could be significantly better, but the sound and cinematics on the CD-ROM version add worthwhile spice. The real strength, though, is that *Ravager* is a rich and complex title that works from a highly usable interface — the kind of thing roleplayers are always looking for.

— *Neil Randall*

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Strong interface with playable combat, and good interaction with NPCs.

85%

LOWS: Graphics aren't great, hard-drive requirements are horrendous, and handling objects can be clumsy.

BOTTOM LINE: If you liked the first Dark Sun game, buy this one immediately. If you want to try just one of them, take *Ravager* without question.

Playability, Not Impossibility

One of *Ravager*'s strongest points is the way it balances challenge and gameplay in such a way that you're never put off by further exploration. Although it contains a number of puzzles, none of them is tricky enough to derail you completely. Early in the game, for example, you'll be able to go through a tapestry, where you'll find a particularly stupid magician who needs help with a potion in order to escape. It's simple enough, and the book on the floor keeps recording your actions so you'll always know what's going on. Later, in the mines, you'll encounter a room full of poisonous gas. You'll have a fan that you can use to disperse the air — and if you point it in the wrong direction, it simply won't work. Some puzzles are much harder, and some are even somewhat illogical, but the game's mechanics won't get in your way. Nice touch.

WARNING
Contains Mature Subject Matter

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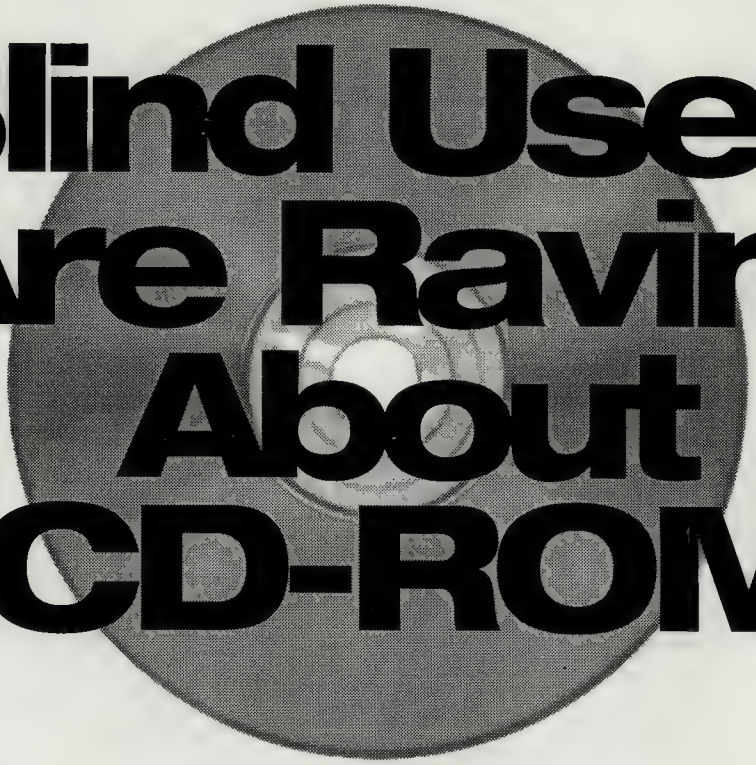
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The Incredible Machine 2

Category: Puzzle
Developer: Jeff Tunnell Productions
Publisher: Sierra, PO Box 485, Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209)-638-4468

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386SX; 2MB RAM; DOS 5.0 or later; 4.5MB hard disk space; VGA; Mouse	486SX; 4MB RAM; Supported sound cards

MSRP: $45.95

If your interest in cause and effect goes beyond figuring out the light switch, try this...

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE



It's the incredible programmable Mel Sclemming, along with a before-and-after pics of his incredible programmable house.

The original *The Incredible Machine* brought budding Rube Goldbergs out of the woodwork in droves. With humorous puzzles that often required some radical mental gymnastics, the game was an instant hit. The sequel, *The Even More Incredible Machine*, was just as good — and this latest in the series, *The Incredible Machine 2*, is yet another success.

In every way, *TIM2* is an improvement, keeping the best parts of the original yet giving the player more options and flexibility.

From the main menu you can choose to work on the puzzles sequentially (there are over 150 of these little nuts to crack), pit yourself against another player, or design your own puzzles. There's also a walk-through for novices, and it's all presided over by the goodly Dr. Tim.

The basic premise remains from the original game: You're presented with puzzles of increasing difficulty that you must solve by combining various parts, each of which performs a specific action: Fans blow air, for example, while balloons float, balls bounce (most of the time), and conveyor belts, well, they convey. Then you arrange these parts so that they work together to solve the problem at hand.



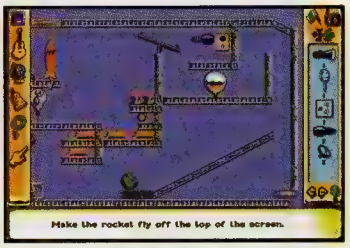
This simple puzzle still requires you to carefully calculate the effects of anti-gravity on the trajectory of the ball.



The humorous main menu features a number of options for slowly but surely losing your mind.

This deceptively simple premise will return to haunt you, though, as you struggle to extrapolate the effect of a boxing glove propelled against a balloon situated next to a spike and supporting an anvil suspended over a teeter-totter on which a ball is set for a flight into a pipe which terminates above an aquarium next to which a hungry cat sits poised and tethered by a string, the other end of which is wrapped around a pulley and tied to the lever of a bomb. Whew! And that's just a section of a *simple* puzzle! Fortunately, Dr. Tim is always ready with a hint to help push you along.

Flexibility is one of this title's strong points. You can change the music, the game screen, or the puzzles themselves. There's even a panel that let's you change the basic physics of your universe, at least as far as gravity and atmospheric pressure are concerned. Want to make a puzzle you've designed just a bit more diabolical? Try changing the gravity constant, so that falling objects drop differently, or perhaps don't even fall at all.



The more difficult puzzles require a complete knowledge of the more sophisticated and programmable machines.

If you've had the feeling lately that you're just not getting your money's worth from the games you buy, then *The Incredible Machine 2* will be a true revelation. The almost infinite permutations of game play, along with a friendly interface, creative graphics, neat sounds and music, and a welcome sense of humor, make *The Incredible Machine 2* a game that's as rewarding as it is challenging.

— Gary Meredith

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

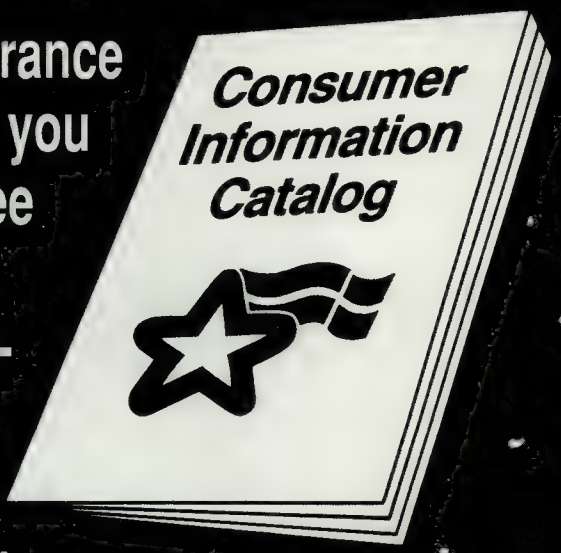
90%

HIGHS: Dozens of clever puzzles, a do-it-yourself mode and near open-ended game play.

LOWS: None, really, unless you consider a somewhat sensitive cursor and a bit of hunger for base memory to be fatal flaws.

BOTTOM LINE: How often can you say you really got what you paid for?

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Expert Chess for Windows

Category:Chess Simulation
Developer:Expert Software
Publisher:Expert Software, 800 Douglas Road, Coral Gables, FL 33134
(305) 567-9990

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386DX; 4MB RAM; Windows 3.1; VGA; 5MB hard-drive space; Mouse	These will suffice, but as with any chess program, the faster the PC the better.

MSRP: $14.95

You won't find a chess program that's less expensive than this one — but just as with anything else, you get what you pay for.

Expert Software's *Expert Chess for Windows* is a lightweight Windows chess program. It provides many of the options you'll need to set up a quick game of chess tailored to your personal preferences, but lacks the challenge serious players are looking for. So the ultimate question is, does *Expert Chess* offer enough value to make it a worthy addition to your Windows family of games and accessories? The question can only be answered by taking a look at the details.

The game's most striking characteristic is the variety of piece sets. The default, and probably the most attractive of the lot, is the marble set — but it's the only set available in 2D mode. The 3D-only sets include medieval characters, glass pieces, martians, alien pieces (not to be confused with martians), and the not-often-seen western figures.

There are also five board types, all available in both 2D and 3D mode. There's the standard black-and-white, marble, wood, metal, and stone. Again, the marble (default) board is the most appealing. The remaining graphic consideration is the background color, which can be mixed to create virtually any shade. These choices should allow you to set up a board that's pleasing to the eye with little or no fuss.

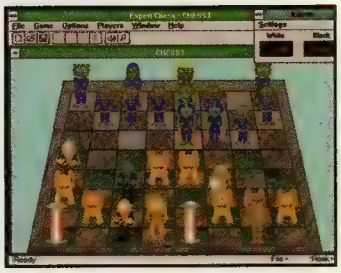
There are other options to consider as well. You can choose background music from any of five classical selections, or loop through all five tracks. During play against the computer, hints and the ability to take bake moves are available. There's an option to replay one of the classic games provided, or any saved game. One feature that's been curiously omitted is some way to set up time limits on a game. You can set how long the computer has to make a move, but that's it. No five-minute games, or 40 moves in two hours, or any of the other time settings you'd expect.

Three windows can be opened to provide information as you play. There's a clock, move list, and an unusual statistics window that keeps track of the number of moves made, percentage of capture moves, number of times in check, forced to checks, and other things. Unfortunately, you won't be able to open all three windows in 3D mode without obscuring part of the board. In fact, the statistics window doesn't fit very well anywhere. In 2D mode, though, all three windows can fit onscreen at once.

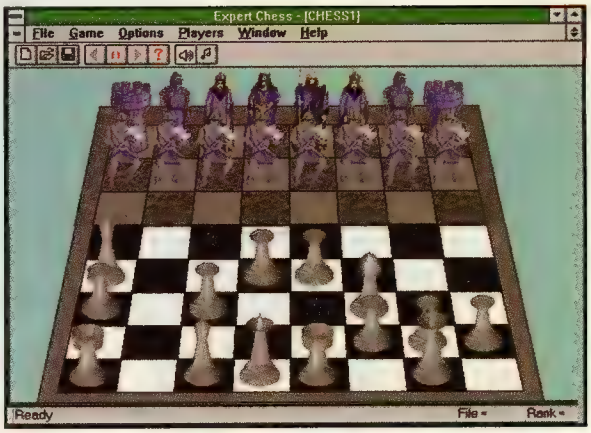
The most disturbing aspect of *Expert Chess* — and probably the most important part of any chess program — is the strength of the computer's AI. There are ten skill levels from novice to expert, and all rely on a combination of the number of seconds and depth the computer will spend on each move. Yet even on the strongest settings and on a 486/66, the computer seemed to struggle. It made glaring mistakes on common openings.

The User's Guide states that the game provides "maximum product value for a minimum price." Considering its $14.95 price, the wacky piece sets, and the simple Windows interface, it can be argued that *Expert Chess* is a good value — but only for the novice who's looking for a quick game now and then. The chess players who might normally make up this product's target audience, on the other hand, won't be impressed. As I look at everything that's offered, I can't help but feel the designers had their priorities mixed up.

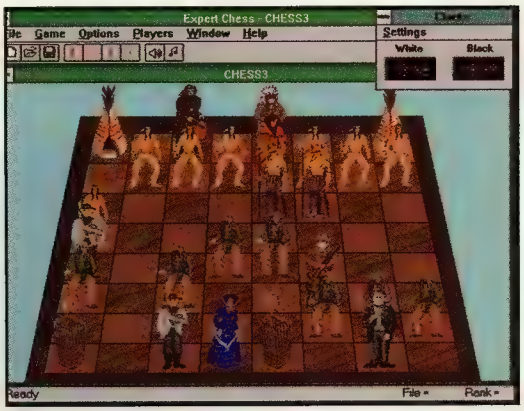
— *Joe Novicki*



Martians on top with the metal board... aliens on bottom with the marble board. Don't get them confused, now.



It's hard to tell the glass pieces apart on the standard board, shown here at the bottom. Those medieval dudes on the stone board are a might easier to deal with.



Not your usual set, Kimosabe. Cowboys and Indians on the wood board — will it be the usual rape of the Natives, or Custer's Last Stand?

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

55%

HIGHS: Graphics are the strong suit here, with plenty of zany piece sets.

LOWS: Weak AI, poor time controls, and no modem play.

BOTTOM LINE: There's really nothing new here. Even at $14.95, it's not of much value to anyone but the novice player.

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Product Information Number 122

Dominus

Category: Fantasy wargame
Developer: Visual Concepts
Publisher: U.S. Gold, 303 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 693-0297

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386/25MHz; 4MB RAM; 20MB hard-drive space; DOS 5.0 or higher; VGA; Mouse	386/33MHz; Supported sound cards

MSRP: $40-60

U.S. Gold's late entry in the fantasy-wargame race combines fast-paced combat with an impressive array of strategic options.

Do you ever dream of being an iron-fisted medieval overlord, protecting your land with legions of monsters, interrogating prisoners in your very own dungeon, mixing up spells and laying traps for the enemy? As Sally Struthers would say, "Sure, we all do" (well, she might if she were a bloodthirsty strategy gamer, which she probably isn't).

Fantasy wargames have become a category all their own — between *Warlords II* and *Master of Magic*, *Warcraft* and *Ultimate Domain*, it's getting tough for a game to distinguish itself from the competition. *Dominus*, U.S. Gold's entry in the race, does that by mixing real-time combat with a wide variety of ways to win.

Dominus puts the player in the plate-mail boots of the Overlord, who rules his dominion from a keep filled with more monsters than you can shake a mace at. Eight clans of invaders — from the fish-like Sea Devils and the barbaric Raiders to the mysterious humans who call themselves The Order — advance through the kingdom and toward the castle, looting your precious resources, probing your defenses, and sometimes joining forces in preparation for the final assault. And it all happens in real time, just to keep you on your toes. No one said being a ruthless monarch was easy.



Combat takes place in Battle Mode — here, your slimy Tentamorts face off against the invaders called Fire Demons.

At your service are four monstrous generals, your liaisons to the beastly troops that guard your lands. Give them an area to defend, and they'll decide how many soldiers to send into battle. They can also lead their minions on spy missions and resource-gathering expeditions, or have them build and lay traps to capture or kill the invaders.

Overlords who enjoy micromanagement can use the game's Battle Mode to zoom in on an area of the kingdom, placing troops, casting spells, and laying traps manually. And for a real personal touch, yet another mode lets you descend on the enemy in a fiery chariot for a quick session of arcade-style head-busting and fireball-tossing. The only time you absolutely *have* to use the Chariot Mode is if the invaders manage to breach your defenses and fight their way to the throne room high atop your castle, but it can be an interesting diversion in less dire circumstances.



You can fight the invaders yourself in the guise of the Overlord, but all the enemy troops tend to drop what they're doing and gang up on you. A dragon-drawn chariot is always available for a quick dust-off, though. Switch to the strategic map to see the big picture.

The Overlord's most interesting work is back at the castle, where you can interrogate prisoners, design traps, mix up spells, or combine some of your existing monsters into hideous new super-soldiers.

It's almost an embarrassment of riches. There are so many choices that it can be hard to decide which tack to take in your quest for victory. Should you stay in the War Room, letting your generals direct the battles, or should you be commanding the troops yourself? Would new, improved monsters give you an edge over the enemy, or is your time better spent mixing spells and trying to learn new ones from your prisoners? Depending on the difficulty level you've chosen, you may need to do all these things to hold onto the advantage — or it may be enough just to deploy troops via the War Room and wait for victory. Between those two extremes, each player will find his own style and strategy.

Unfortunately, not all of the options are self-explanatory. For instance, you can grill a prisoner until he tells you the name of his clan's leader or his reasons for invading your kingdom, but it's never really clear how that information can be used. And creating new monsters is largely a process of trial-and-error; a mutant won't always have the attributes you'd expect. The designers of *Dominus* may have purposely left it up to the player to discover a lot of these details as the game unfolds, but a few more hints would have been welcome.

Another weakness is the game's interface, which proves that "point-and-click" doesn't always equal simplicity. The various screens aren't connected in an intuitive way, so it's easy to make a

An Overlord's Castle is his Home

As the Overlord, you need a suitable base of operations. *Dominus* sets you up with a choice piece of medieval-type real estate — a sweet little mountain-top fixer-upper with all the amenities:

In the War Room, you issue orders to your four generals. They can command their monster squads to attack invaders, gather components for spells and traps, lay traps, or spy on the enemy.





The Trap Room provides you with all the tools you need to create some nasty surprises for the enemy. On the drawing board is a sharp idea for stopping invaders from laying claim to your resources.

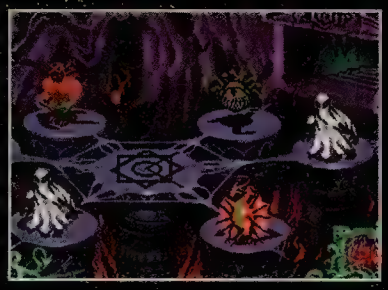


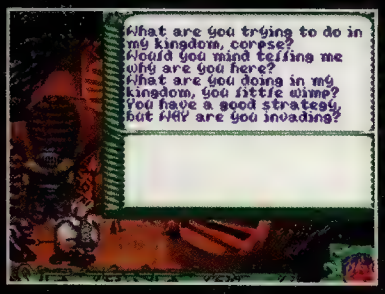
You can make your own magic in the Spell Room. A spell book lists all known spells — as you discover hidden spells, you try your hand at those, too.

Your monstrous militia resides in the castle's Kennel. This is where you get stats on all your forces and choose monsters to send to the Mixing Room.



The Monster Mixing Room allows you to create mutants — new creatures made by combining existing monsters. Each of the six positions corresponds with a different attribute — Strength, Intelligence, etc. Mixing together races that fear each other makes for a particularly nasty soldier.





You can welcome captured invaders in style in the Interrogation Room. Play your cards right, and they'll spill their guts about what monsters they fear the most. If you're lucky, they may even reveal recipes for secret spells.

couple of mouse clicks and find yourself somewhere you didn't want to be — or even back where you started.

Worse than that, your choice of views in Battle Mode is limited to close-up and extreme close-up, each of which only shows a small portion of the battlefield. There's no way to zoom out and see an overview of a given sector of your kingdom, so too much time is spent scrolling around in search of the enemy. Finally, there's no way to replenish your supply of monsters, so when the game thoughtfully informs you you're running low on troops, there's nothing you can do about it.

U.S. Gold is pushing this title as a challenger to some of the most addictive games on the market, but *Dominus* is too complex to have the "just one more game" quality of a program like *Warcraft* or *Warlords II* — and it's too fast-paced to have the "just one more hour" quality of *Civilization* and its ilk.

Of course, complex and fast-paced are hardly bad things for a game to be. And despite a few flaws, *Dominus* does deliver some nice surprises for strategy gamers and fantasy fans alike.

—Dan Bennett





This Sea Devil can't resist the temptation of an unguarded treasure chest — but a crossbow trap will teach him a pointed lesson about looting on your turf.

PCG

PC GAMER **FINAL VERDICT**

HIGHS: The ability to create your own monsters and discover new spells is a plus.

75%

LOWS: The manual could be better, it's easy to get lost in the clunky interface, and more combat views would be nice.

BOTTOM LINE: With real-time action and a variety of paths to victory, *Dominus* is a worthy addition to the growing pantheon of fantasy games.

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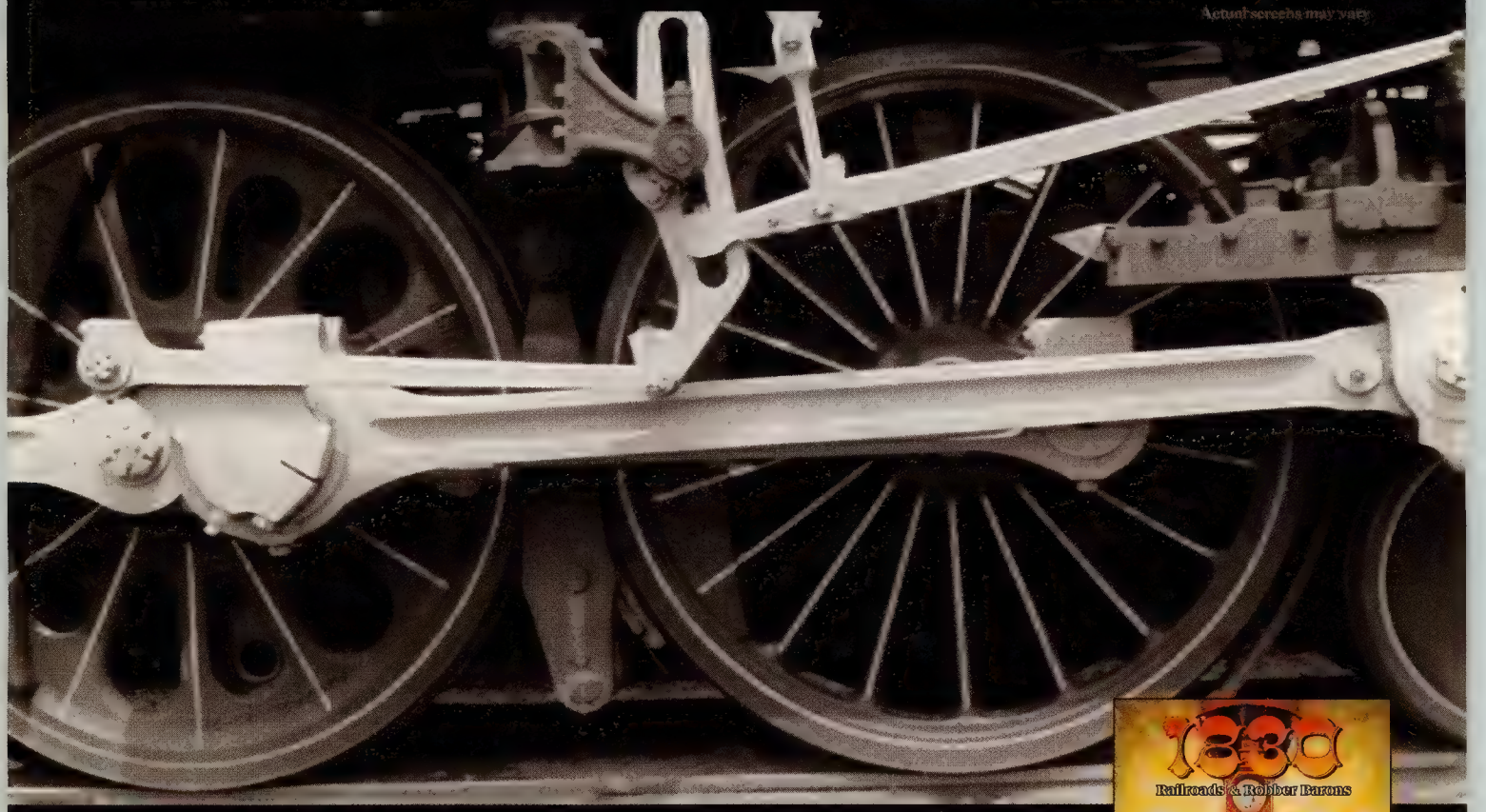
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Product Information Number 89

The Legend of Kyrandia, Book Three: Malcolm's

Category: Adventure/Role Playing
Developer: Westwood Studios
Publisher: Virgin Interactive, 18061 Fitch Avenue, Irvine, CA 92714
(714)-833-8710

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386/33MHz; Double-spin CD-ROM drive; 560K; 4MB RAM; 7MB Hard-drive space; VGA; Mouse; Supported sound cards	486/50MHz; 8MB RAM; SVGA (VLB); 16-bit Sound card

M.S.R.P.: $40-$60

So, you thought you knew Malcolm the Jester, huh? Well, maybe you should try listening to his side of the story....

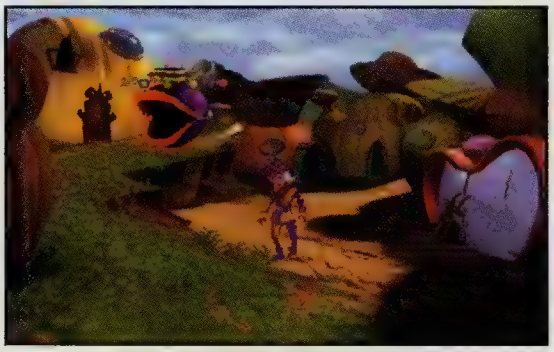
Ah, sweet revisionism. After two successful games in that magic land of Kyrandia, we're suddenly asked to believe that up is down, black is white, and Malcolm the Jester isn't the total scoundrel we've been led to believe. This sort of thing usually occurs only in soap operas!

Yep, in this third installment of the Kyrandia saga, *Malcolm's Revenge*, we get to see life from the other side — the dark side if you will — with Malcolm the Jester.

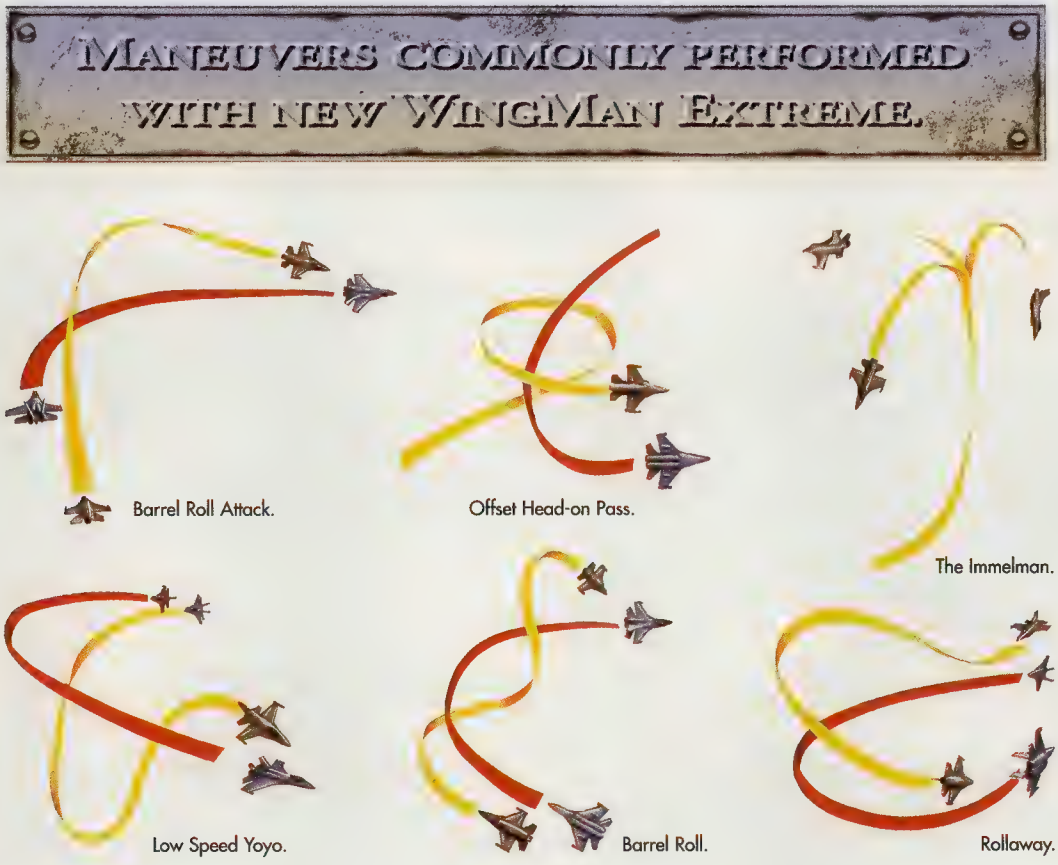
But have we really been wrong about Malcolm? Could he perhaps be the victim of prejudice, a basically good soul who simply marches to the beat of a very different drummer? Well, that's up to you, as Malcolm, to discover. Freed from a seemingly eternal prison as a statue after being convicted in the death of King William and Queen Katherine, maybe-malevolent Malcolm sets out to clear his not-so-spotless reputation.

The first big hurdle is the fact that, even though he's a free man, he's living on borrowed time. The authorities want him off the isle of Kyrandia, but they're not much help when it comes to providing transportation. As you explore Kyrandia it becomes obvious that there might be several avenues of escape available, but each requires a different set of items and circumstances to succeed.

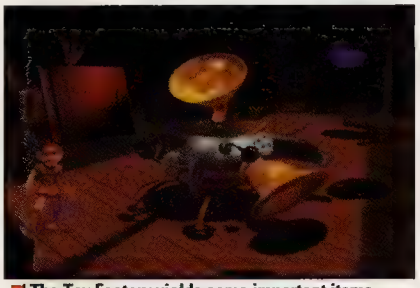
Most Kyrandians have very long memories, so the first order of business is to find some sort of disguise. The easiest disguise to effect is, believe or not, a hypnotized squirrel. Malcolm's had something of a love/hate — mostly hate — relationship with squirrels since his earliest days, and



Not much has changed in the village. With your reputation, you'll need some sort of disguise or the Kyrandians will throw you in jail.



Revenge



The Toy Factory yields some important items, especially if you can figure out the machine's switches. A blueprint or two would help.

he does have a way with them. If you can find the right objects to combine — and it helps to carefully follow the intro covering Malcolm's own "Wonder Years" — you'll have no problem in convincing a hapless squirrel to function as a chapeau. And in a pinch, a de-hypnotized squirrel can clear out the odd restaurant in no time flat.

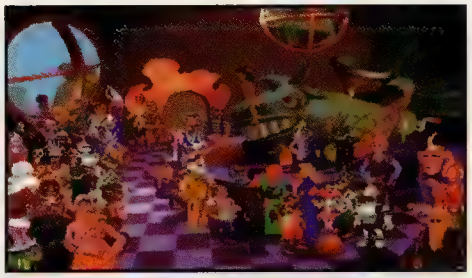
Many of the ways off the island involve getting to one of the take-off points with the right items and knowledge. The easiest way off is to find some means of breaking down the rather precarious-looking wall in the cellar beneath the Toy Factory. If you can get inside — and you have some sort of container — you can collect enough Portal Potion to get outta Dodge quickly. Just remember, you've got to be in exactly the right spot for the potion to work.

PC GAMER EDITORS CHOICE

Malcolm's Revenge, involved and convoluted as it is, still retains the joy and sense of wonder of the earlier two games, albeit tempered with Malcolm's twisted sense of humor. This sense manifests itself in the funny, if not altogether refined, graphics, and in the dialogue. You really must play this with a good sound board in order to hear all the great voices, especially Malcolm's, which at times sounds suspiciously like Montgomery Burns of "Simpsons" fame.

The interface, carried over from the earlier games, has its good and bad points. On the plus side, it makes accessing your inventory a breeze, and you can easily get to the controls for saving and loading games, and controlling other game parameters. On the minus side, it can be irritating, popping up as it does every time the cursor moves to the bottom of the screen. This is especially frustrating in scenes where you need to maneuver Malcolm to an area near the bottom of the screen. After a while, you learn to sense where the cursor will trigger the interface, but early on it can be a real pain.

Otherwise, *Malcolm's Revenge* has much to recommend it. It carries on the spirit of the earlier games without slavishly copying their formulae. Indeed, it has its own distinct, if warped, personality, one that's rather a refreshing change from the



Those fish cream sandwiches require a bit of milk, so you'll have to find some acceptable feed to lure the cows back to the dairy.

treacly goodness of the earlier games. You only have to hear the opening theme music to know something has radically changed. So if you'd like to try out a fantasy adventure with a character that's equal parts Larry Laffer and Jack Nicholson, look no further than *Malcolm's Revenge*.

—Gary Meredith

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Great characterizations; Simple interface.

88%

LOWS: So-so graphics except in the Windows Mode. Interface can get in your way.

BOTTOM LINE: Tricky puzzles, hilarious dialogue, and no single right way to win team up to produce a challenging and entertaining adventure.

MANEUVERS COMMONLY PERFORMED WITH OTHER JOYSTICKS.





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Sid Meier's Colonization

Category: Strategic simulation
Developer: MicroProse
Publisher: MicroProse, 180 Lakefront Drive, Hunt Valley, MD 21030
(410) 771-0440

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
286; 1MB RAM; 5MB hard disk space; 3.3 or higher; VGA	386; 2MB RAM; 5MB hard disk space; VGA graphics; Mouse; Supported sound cards

M.S.R.P.: $69.95

In which Sid Meier, having had a long, heart-to-heart with God, gives us a chance to get it right this time.

As I write this review, we've just observed another Columbus Day — and it's *not* the same holiday as it was when I was child. Historical reinterpretation, moral relevancy, and political correctness have turned a celebration of our beginnings into a battlefield of rhetoric. It's a volatile holiday, and the perfect setting in which to consider Sid Meier's latest strategic simulation, *Colonization*.

Colonization places you at the forefront of exploration in the New World during that much less morally ambiguous period between the first visits of Columbus and the wars of independence in the late 18th century — when might really did make right.

As an offshoot of Meier's popular *Civilization*, *Colonization* possesses the same strengths and weaknesses of its predecessor. The strengths — a sophisticated AI module handling literally hundreds of parameters, and an interface that does as good a management job as any — are what set both of these games apart. There are so many variables that two similar gaming experiences are the rarest of creatures. These strengths can become weakness, though, if you let the deluge of information to be processed and acted upon cause you to obsess on small points to the exclusion of the big picture.



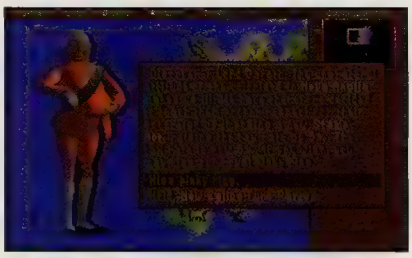
Your home country is the major market for all produce and manufactured goods until you've developed other avenues in the New World.

The game sets you down in the New World as the representative of one of the four major colonial powers of the 16th century — England, France, the Netherlands, and Spain. Your job is to establish not only your colonies' but your country's political, economic and military presence in this new land, all against a background of competition from other colonizing nations and the presence of the native inhabitants. How well you perform the balancing act this entails determines your outcome in *Colonization*. To win, you must develop your colonies to the point where a bid for independence can be made — and you've got only a bit more than 300 years to succeed.

You begin by setting sail aboard the one ship you've been granted, a small caravelle. Then, in considerably less time than it took the original settlers, you're on the shores of the new world. It's a good idea to have some notion of your colonization strategy *before* you set foot on land. For example, if you plan to conduct primarily an agricultural strategy, it won't make much sense to settle in the northern areas. You can grow food and other crops there, but not as easily as you can further south.

One of the balances you must strike is between what you keep for yourself in the way of agricultural and manufactured goods, and what you ship back home to sell. A case in point is tobacco. Depending on market conditions you can get a pretty fair price for your leaf. If, however, you keep the tobacco and put it into manufactured cigars, your profit is three times as great.

Work force management is also critical. You're pretty much stuck with a certain mix of colonists to begin with, so if you try to make farmers out of lumberjacks you're not going to have the sort of production you would with full-fledged tree cutters. But if you wait long enough, the workers you need will line up on the docks of your native land to travel to the new world. You can also actively recruit for specific vocations while in port back home, although this means spending some money. More expensive still, you can bribe your way into the Royal Academy and coerce the institution to train whatever sort of colonists you'd like.



His Royal Highness is a constant thorn in your side. As the tax rate increases, so to does anti-crown sentiment. You'll need at least half of the populace against the King to start a revolution.

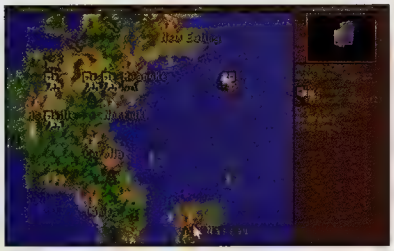
When you establish a colony, you also receive surrounding countryside for use — unless it's in the hands of the natives. Some types of land are obviously more suitable for farming than others, but you might temporarily want to use the less fertile land for food production in a dietary pinch. Note however that some land won't grow food at all; try planting crops on this terrain, and you'll be advised that it's an exercise in futility. Likewise, you can't get ore from every kind of land.



The colony screen provides compete information on land and labor use, building projects, and goods available for trade or manufacture. Make sure you've assigned the right people to the right jobs.

A nice feature of *Colonization* is the choice you're given at the outset of playing with a geographically correct option — America — or making the game a true voyage of exploration by going with the New World option. Here, the map is randomly generated so there are no preconceived notions of climate, natural resources, and native populations. It makes colonizing the new world the crap shoot it actually was for those early explorers.

In a nod to semi-history, there's a Continental Congress extant even at the beginning of the game, and you'll be asked to nominate a historical figure to the Congress. Once this person has been installed, certain aspects of game play change.



When your competitors in the New World get a little greedy, it's handy to have a privateer or two lying in wait off the coast. The Florida straits is another good location for a little preemptive scavenging.

Should Pocahontas enter the Congress, for example, the difficulties of Native American affairs are eased by half. An especially useful nomination is Jakob Fugger. This successful German merchant's presence in Congress means that any trade boycotts incurred by tax protests are lifted, and all tax debt forgiven.

There's one aspect of colonization that's conspicuous by its absence. Slavery, such a critical influence on the development of America, is not addressed at all. In these days of political correctness, it's understandable that the issue of slavery was eliminated — and this would be acceptable if the game were consistently "PC." But the subjugation, exploitation, and sometimes extermination of *native* peoples is vital to gameplay, and featured in all its horrible infamy. So it's a perplexing why an equally important facet of colonization, slavery, is totally ignored. Are we to assume that the fate of the Indians is somehow more palatable?



High membership in the Sons of Liberty raises productivity and creates a better-educated populace more inclined to favor independence.

To be fair, however, *Colonization* can by no means be considered an accurate historical simulation, nor is it being marketed as such. But given the game's treatment of native American relations, couldn't MicroProse have given us the opportunity to introduce African immigrants, this time not as chattel but as fully equal, contributing colonists? The chance to extrapolate from this fundamental change in American policy could have made *Colonization* an even better simulation.

It would be great to report that *Colonization* is a visual and aural step beyond its predecessor. It's not, however — and that's something that might put off people expecting good looks to go along with the good gameplay. There's no question that the AI and data management is excellent here, but it's certainly not unreasonable to expect better graphics than these, especially in the static information displays. I'm not coming down on the side of image over substance; I'm just wondering why MicroProse chose to wed 1992 graphics to a 1994 game.

Despite a couple of tiny shortcomings and one major — possibly understandable — omission, *Colonization* offers a wondrous gaming experience that will captivate you with the complexities of a blossoming land.

— Gary Meredith

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: An effective interface for gaming complexity to satisfy the most exacting player.

85%

LOWS: We've-seen-it-all-before graphics mean that the game may be overlooked by those whose first criterion is visual flash.

BOTTOM LINE: Strategic simulation as only Sid can do it. Need we say more?

And the grand prize winner is...

An important part of gameplay in *Colonization* is the recognition that the major colonial powers of the 16th century were in the New World for very different reasons. And although some attempt has been made to link these motives to some sort of genetic/cultural factor, the real driving force for colonization had as much to do with immediate realities as anything else.



The strong streak of religious fundamentalism that still runs through our cultural fabric comes mostly from English religious outcasts seeking freedom from persecution by the Crown and the Anglican Church.

The Netherlands, for example, was a small country even by European standards. In fact, its greatest explorer was an Englishman, Henry Hudson. But small as it was, the Netherlands had a large merchant class, and these entrepreneurs found the trade possibilities awaiting them in the New World too lucrative to ignore. Forming a number of trading companies, the Dutch felt no real urge to leave their homeland for good, so they saw colonization as a matter of merely setting up branch enterprises.

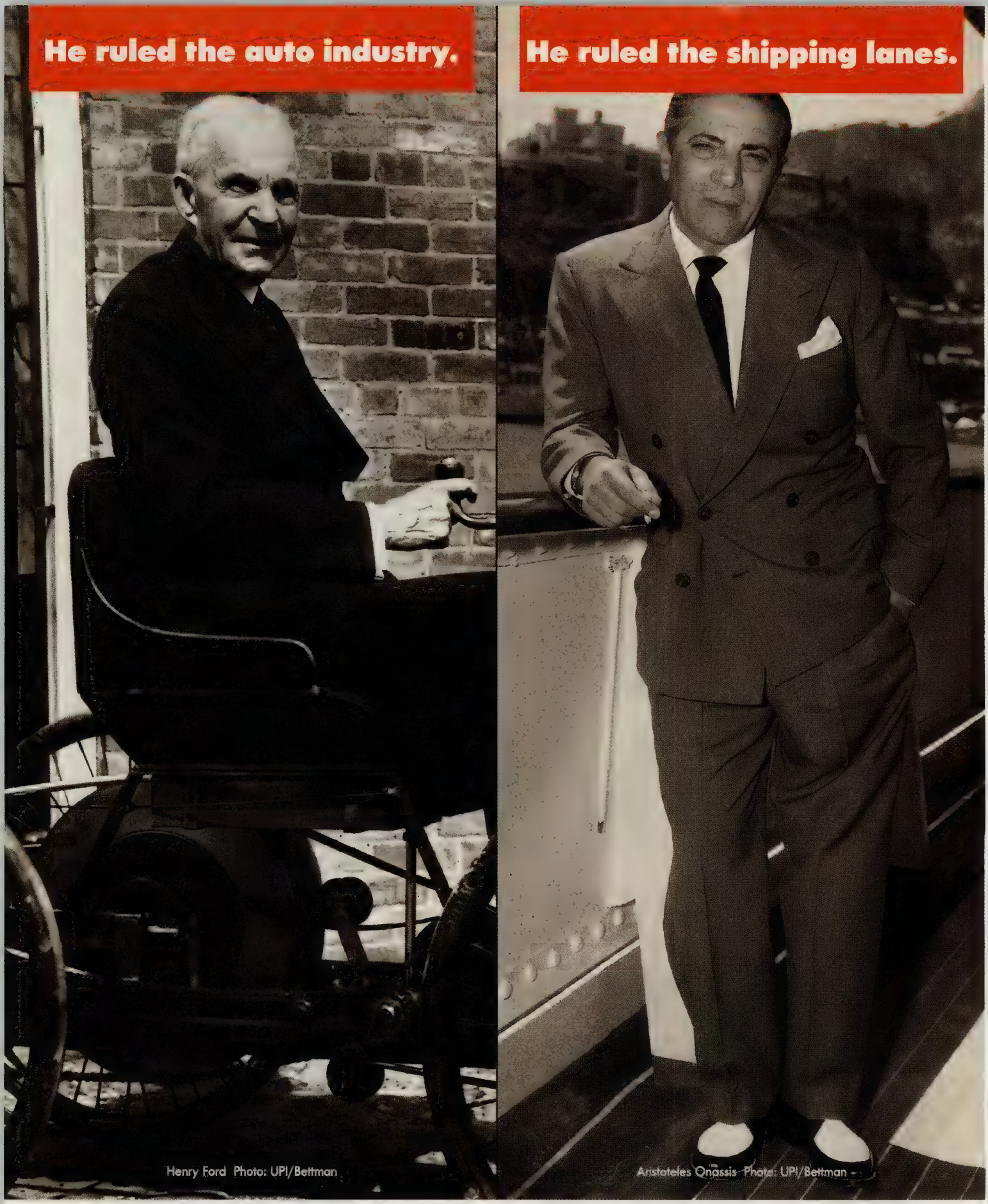
The English too saw the opportunity for great wealth across the Atlantic, but they also had social pressures which directed them to follow a more or less permanent emigration policy. With all the religious persecution in England, there was no shortage of souls lining up to journey to an unknown land. And like Australia a couple of centuries later, America was viewed by England as the perfect repository for social misfits — primarily prison inmates. The Georgia colony was comprised entirely of criminals at first.

The Spanish had two primary overriding reasons for venturing to the Americas — the acquisition of gold, and the conversion of souls. The former is well-documented: In the late 16th century, the cost of replacing a Spanish naval fleet that was sitting at the bottom of the English Channel was a great impetus to send Spaniards off on treasure hunts, and so the conquistadors mercilessly plundered the native populace in hopes of finding great stores of gold. Then, in a sort of twisted attempt at recompense, Spanish missionaries tried to bring the eternal Truth to the newly pauperized natives (the few that were left, anyway), building missions far afield, many of which still stand today.

The French are hard to figure. They had, on the surface, perhaps the best chance of all to succeed in the New World. Early on they realized the need to integrate with rather than exploit or subjugate the American natives, so their dealings with the indians lacked the acrimony of both Dutch and English colonists, or the tragedy of the Spanish. And yet their presence was confined mostly to outposts and coastal cities, the exception being the Quebecois of Canada. The main reason for France's relative failure in America lies with the reluctance of the French populace to emigrate. In fact, the few French who *did* make it to America in the early colonial period were considered odd by the majority.



The Spanish followed two great callings — to convert the "heathen" natives to Christianity, and to fill the Spanish coffers with gold at the expense of those very same "heathens."



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He ruled motion pictures.

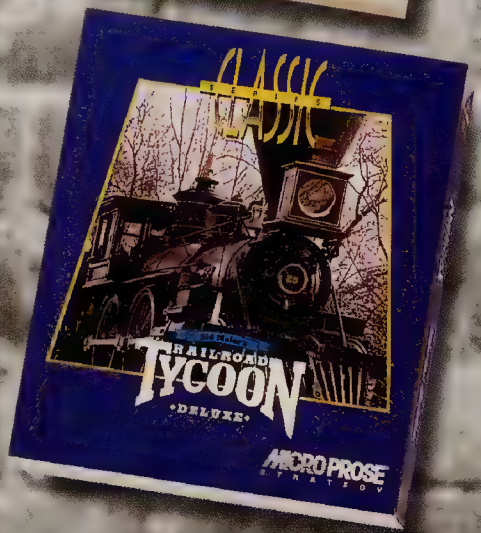


Louis B. Mayer Photo: UPI/Bettman

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Product Information Number 117

Air Havoc Controller

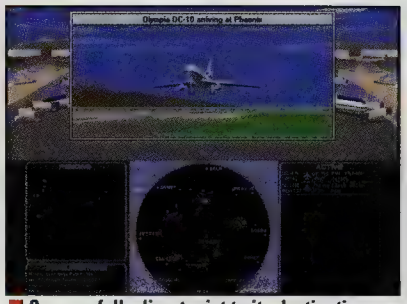
CD-ROM

Category: Simulation
Developer: Rainbow
Publisher: Trimark Interactive, 2644 30th St., Santa Monica, CA 90405 (310) 392-3243

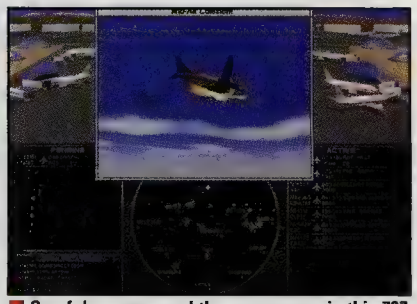
REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
Double-speed CD-ROM drive; 486/33MHz; 8 MB RAM; 2MB Hard Drive Space; Windows 3.1 or later; VGA; Mouse	VESA or PCI local-bus graphics card; Windows-compatible sound card

M.S.R.P.: $29.95

Stunning graphics and excellent sound save *Air Havoc Controller* from being just another control-tower simulation.



Successfully direct a jet to its destination airport, and you'll see a striking Video for Windows animation as it touches down.



One false move, and the passengers in this 737 will wish they'd taken the train.

With *Air Havoc Controller*, Trimark Interactive is betting people will want to experience a little of the stress that faces air traffic controllers, and they're probably right. This kind of high-pressure simulation can be a lot of fun, as long as you know you can quit any time you want — and that no real lives are depending on your every move.

Air Havoc Controller isn't the first ATC simulation for the PC, and like those that have gone before, it's pretty simple at its core. You're in charge of a 30-mile wide chunk of Arizona airspace that includes three airports (Phoenix, Deer Valley, and Scottsdale) and several navigation beacons. Planes taking off, landing, or just passing through the area all need your help to avoid mid-air collisions and all those other misadventures the FAA tends to frown upon.

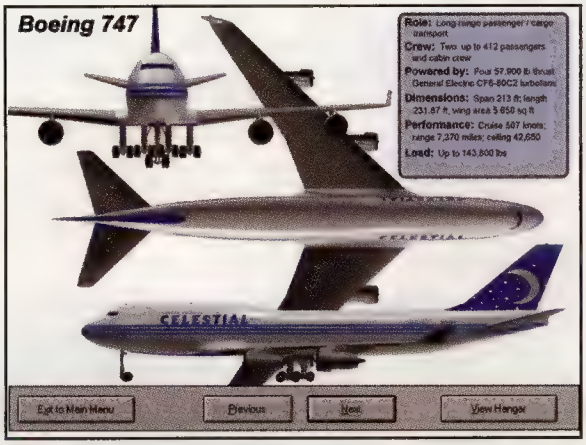
It doesn't sound like much, but things get interesting fast when you've got eight or more planes in the air, all with different flight plans, speeds and altitudes — or when two of those jetliners are coming from opposite directions and planning to land at the same airport. All you can do is "rack 'em and stack 'em," as they say in the air-traffic trade, and hope things don't get any hairier before you can hand off



some of those planes to other airports or to another controller outside your airspace.

What makes *Air Havoc Controller* different from other ATC simulations are the sights and sounds. The game takes full advantage of Windows' 640x480 resolution in 256 colors, so even the still pictures in the on-line aircraft encyclopedia look very sharp. The game also features 455 megabytes of movies created in 3D Studio. Release a plane for take-off, and you see it head for the sky, its every angle and curve rendered in painstaking detail. Direct a jet to your airport, and you're treated to its graceful touchdown, complete with digitized stereo sound.

Of course, the most spectacular visuals only show themselves when something goes horribly wrong and one or two planes go down in flames. But the designers of *Air Havoc Controller*, rightfully proud of their work, were thoughtful enough to include a VCR option that lets you view any of the game's movies from the main menu.



The on-line encyclopedia provides diagrams and specifications of all the aircraft in the simulation.

Air Havoc Controller has several preset difficulty options, each with a different time limit and number of planes. The highest level, "Terror in the Tower," has 50 planes passing through your airspace in just 45 minutes — but if that's not tough enough, the game can be customized to last up to 90 minutes and send as many as 99 planes your way.

Unfortunately, your score isn't adjusted to reflect the challenge; a perfect score of 1,000 at the easiest level isn't nearly as impressive as a rating of 600 at the toughest, but there's nothing in the game to reflect that. Also, the game doesn't keep track of scores — a shame, since a simple "Hall of Fame" screen should have been easy to add.

Ultimately, this *is* a pretty limited game. Still, *Air Havoc Controller* is a real treat for the eyes and ears — and at times (despite its tendency to get repetitious), the adrenal glands. Gamers with powerful multimedia machines — Pentium processors and triple-speed CD-ROM drives — will want to take advantage of an offer to upgrade the game to an enhanced version with 16-bit, CD-quality sound effects and 32K-color graphics.

—Dan Bennett

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Truly beautiful 3D animations and realistic stereo sounds.

75%

LOWS: No provision for saving or restoring sessions. Little variation in game play.

BOTTOM LINE: AHC's outstanding graphics and sound make it stand out from the crowd.

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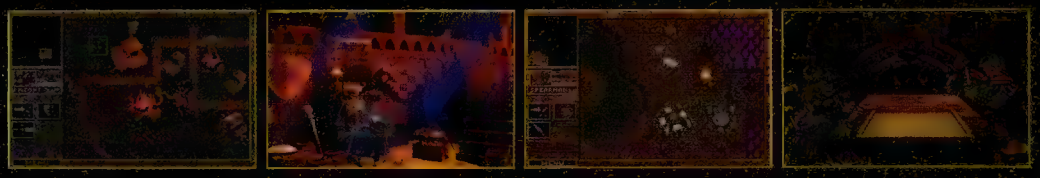
"With its combination of real-time strategy, resource management, simple combat system, and great graphics and sound, WarCraft has all the elements to become a mega-hit!"
Matt Firme Editor, PC GAMER

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Product Information Number 157

Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure

Category: Adventure game
Developer: Adeline Software
Publisher: Electronic Arts, PO Box 7530, San Mateo, CA 94126
[800]-245-4525

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
CD-ROM drive; 486/25; DOS 5.0; 4MB RAM; SVGA	Double-speed CD-ROM drive; 486/33; Supported sound cards.

M.S.R.P.: $59.95

Only the French can design a game where the hero's a pinhead in a bedshirt — and still make it fun to play.

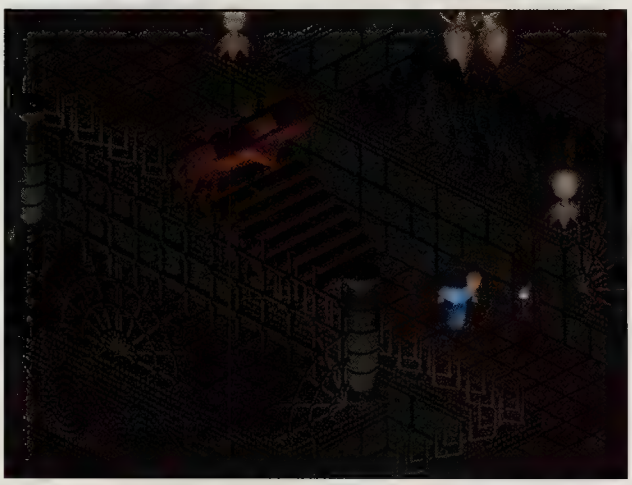
I've always loved a good adventure game; puzzling through worlds you can only dream about as a character you'll never be just gives me a special thrill. Yet lately I've felt a bit left out, because it seems there aren't as many adventure games being released as there once were. And much of this year's sparse crop has been disappointing — take a look at *Robinson's Requiem* or *Shadow of the Comet*, for example.

Oh sure, there have been some good games, too — like Sierra's *Gabriel Knight*, LucasArts *Sam and Max Hit the Road*, and last month's Editors' Choice winner *Beneath a Steel Sky* by Virgin. But still, too many of the adventures being produced rely on blocky graphics and tired old find-the-clue pixel hunts, instead of trying to figure out what makes the best games in this exciting genre so good.

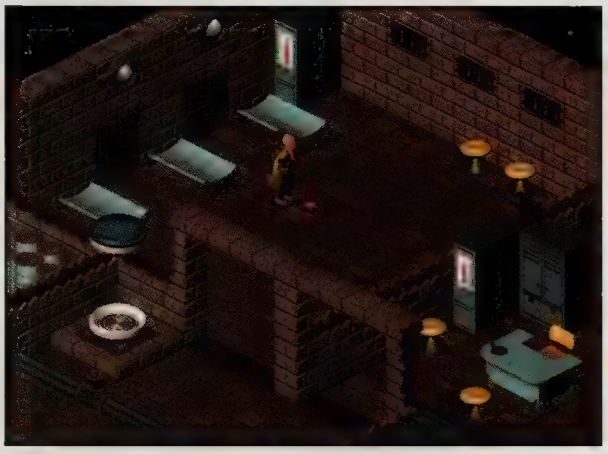
With *Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure*, Adeline Software shows that they've been paying attention to what works — and even thought up a few new things of their own.

By mixing the simple and effective control scheme of a game like *Alone in the Dark* with a superb graphic environment, Adeline set themselves up with a good foundation on which to build a truly unique game. Add to that efficient inventory management and the ability to change your character's attributes to suit a variety of situations, and you're talking about something decidedly different.

But don't expect *Relentless* to win you over with a nail-biting thriller of a storyline. The plot is one from the "defeat the tyrant" files, with a bit of cartoonish magic and prophecy thrown in for good measure. While the story doesn't ever hamper your enjoyment of the game, it may initially be a little thin for players who prize plot over action.



There are plenty of these action-packed surprises waiting for you in Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure.



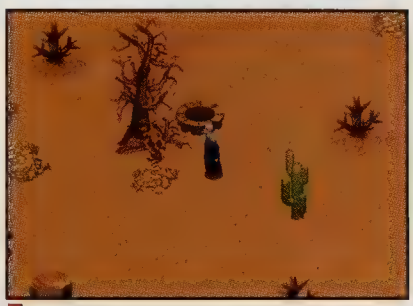
Twinsun is a place full of magic, hearts, lucky clovers... Wait a minute! Is this a game, or a breakfast-cereal commercial?

There is *some* story, though. During the introduction you'll learn how the evil Dr. FunFrock has taken control of the planet Twinsun, moving its people to the southern hemisphere (*why* he did this is part of what you're trying to figure out). He achieves his goals through military occupation, as well as some diabolical technologies: cloning and teleportation. Through cloning, FunFrock has almost unlimited forces at his disposal. And by using teleporters, those clones can appear at nearly any location to suppress potential troublemakers.

As Twinsen, a young Quetch (one of the four races of Twinsun), you'll attempt to fulfill a prophecy and overthrow FunFrock. Sounds simple, right?

Well, first you'll have to get yourself out of a prison cell, duke it out with some guards, then make your way back home — avoiding some very nasty Groboclones along the way. And it's in these first few sequences that the interface of *Relentless* begins to show its charm. Moving the character with the cursor keys couldn't be easier — just push 'em and go. Press the CTRL key to change your attributes, hit the spacebar to use an item or perform an action, and use the SHIFT key to access your inventory. It's all very simple and natural, something a complete novice can grasp and experienced gameplayers will appreciate. Unfortunately, there's no option for mouse or joystick control.

As mentioned, you can set different attributes for your character: Normal, Athletic, Aggressive, and Discreet. In the normal mode you walk, talk, activate devices, and pick up items during your journey by using the cursor keys and hitting the spacebar. The Athletic mode allows the player to run, jump, and even call attention to himself, while Discreet lets you sneak quietly past trouble spots.



As this reclusive Rabbibunni will soon tell you this desert locale is home to a few secrets

Aggressive attributes are used for combat, and can be set to auto mode so that when you hit the spacebar your character automatically chooses an appropriate attack (such as a punch or kick) to use on your opponent. If you prefer, you can pick your own

offense by selecting the manual mode, then using the spacebar and cursor keys to control combat. Sometimes its best to use a magic attack by pressing the ALT key — especially considering Twinsen's annoying inability to move or run while he's being hit (the manual states that the best way to avoid this problem is to run backward instead of forward).

The save-game feature is a fairly clumsy affair. You'll have to quit the game you're currently playing in order to Copy Current Game to a new name (each new game you play must have its own name). And if you think you can rejoin a saved game exactly where you left off, you're in for a surprise. When you restore, you're often thrown back a screen from where you left off and must work back to where you want to be, making the more difficult puzzles even more frustrating. Also, if you're unfortunate enough to make a mistake where a Groboclone equipped with a sleeping ball appears, you *will* (there's no getting out of this) be sent to the nearest detention cell and only be able to restore your game from there.



Wait a minute — that water looks pretty rough!



It looks like Twinsen may have a little trouble keeping his meal down on this journey.

With the extra storage space a CD-ROM affords, it's no surprise that *Relentless* features full voice acting. At its best, this can help propel the story to a new level. But too often the acting (or overacting, I should say) is cartoonish and annoying. It's all fun at first, but I recommend you listen to it once and then set the volume accordingly.

Quality sound effects, however, are not lacking. From the popgun sounds of the guards' rifles to the realistic footsteps crossing a marble floor, then turning to a soft crush of shoes on carpet, you'll want to keep these sounds coming through loud and clear.

But the most prominent and defining feature of *Relentless* is the quality of its graphics and animation. If you like your pixels big and juicy, you'll need to look elsewhere to satisfy your desires. The SVGA graphics are rich and evocative, and the inhabitants of Twinsun move smoothly and convincingly through their 3D-rendered world — even on a 486/33. It's a remarkable thing to see.

The plot and characters in *Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure* are more cute than menacing, and the puzzles here aren't likely to challenge experienced gamers used to mind-bending difficulty. But that's not what this game is all about. *Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure* presents an inviting, enjoyable world that'll make you want to charge forward just to see what's next. And isn't that ultimately what adventure gaming is all about?

— Todd Vaughn



Even though he's not much of a traveler, Twinsen *must* get on that boat!

Attitude Adjustment Made Easy

By giving the player the option of changing character attributes, Adeline Software has opened up a whole new area for exploration — and it's an idea I think more publishers should take the time to consider. Although the use of these different modes in *Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure* is somewhat limited, the potential the notion offers shouldn't be lost on game developers.









PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Great look, extremely easy to use interface, and nice sound effects.

82%

LOWS: Cartoonish storyline, poor voice acting, and a clumsy save-game feature.

BOTTOM LINE: If you can look beyond the few flaws, *Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure* is a pretty unique — and enjoyable — adventure game.



DreamWeb

~~Sunday April~~
Monday April 9
The clock keeps going round.
It wont ~~fuck~~ tell me the time.
Santa Claus gave a gun to me.
Let loose the puppies of War.
I died last night.

"....AWESOME...!"

"....BREATH TAKING...!"

"....HEART STOPPING...!"

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Product Information Number 101

Blackthorne

Action adventure
Developer: Blizzard Entertainment
Publisher: Interplay, 17922 Fitch Avenue, Irvine, CA 92714
(714) 553-6655

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
386/16MHz; 4MB RAM (2MB EMS); 1.7MB hard-drive space	386/25MHz; Supported sound cards; Gravis GamePad

M.S.R.P.: $40-$60

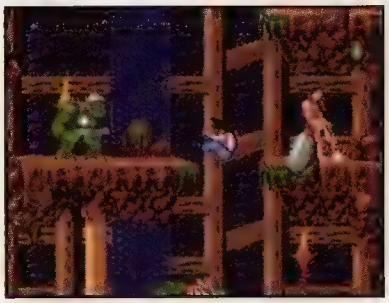
Guns, guts, glory — this one has everything an arcade fan could ask for. And your main task is a simple one: kill, and kill again.

With so many first-person action titles on the way, I'm afraid that an "old-fashioned" action game like *Blackthorne* might be lost in the crowd. That would be a real shame, because this game delivers satisfaction from the minute you start playing.

You play as Kyle Blackthorne, a former U.S.M.C. officer turned mercenary. Well, that's only partially true. In truth, Blackthorne is the son of King Vlaros, one-time ruler of the other-dimensional land of Tuul, and his life as a marine and hired gun has merely been training for his ultimate return to Tuul.

When Blackthorne escapes the M.P.'s guarding him and flys a stolen helicopter to apparent safety, he finds himself thrown back into Tuul. His mission — to free his people, the Androthi, from the tyranny of the sorcerer Sarlac, leader of the evil and appropriately mutated Ka'dra'suul and murderer of Blackthorne's father King Vlaros.

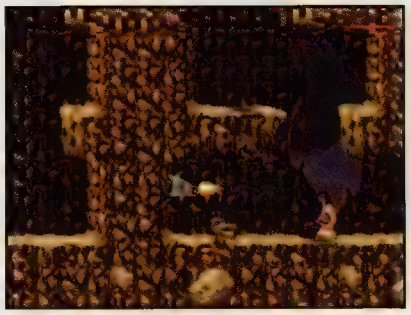
Blizzard has done a fantastic job of animating Kyle Blackthorne. You see your character run, crouch, shoot, jump, climb, and roll his way through 17 levels just chock-full of enemies and obstacles. There are a few puzzles thrown in — mostly of the step-on-this-plate-to-open-that-door-to-get-a-key variety — but the focus is decidedly on shootin' and runnin' and jumpin'. The enemy animations, however, aren't quite as good those for the hero; in fact, your foes hardly move except to step from the shadows and open fire.



Trying to save every Androthi you meet can be dangerous — and futile. Look out below!



This is what it's all about — filling one of Sarlac's minions full of buckshot. Open up and bleed, hellspawn!

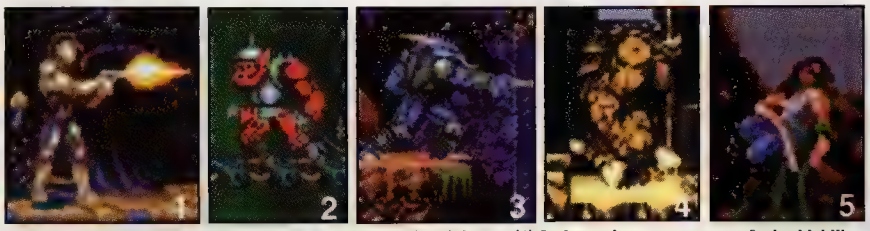


When you see pressure pads, watch out! They might open a door, or they might cause a machine gun to drop from the ceiling.

Music usually takes a back seat to the gunplay in this sort of game, but the soundtrack here is phenomenal, a strange blend of martial and medieval tunes set against modulating synth tones. The sound is so rich, in fact, that it truly deserves the "3D Sound" moniker. The effects are also good, with gunshots and grunts bringing the bloody adventure to life. And thanks to full support of the Gravis Gamepad, you can sit back and enjoy that soundtrack without being chained to your keyboard (though keyboard control is very good).

Unless you hate action games, pick up *Blackthorne*. And if you *do* hate action games, at least take a look at it over a friend's shoulder: You might be converted. Oh, by the way, you *can* shoot those friendly Androthi chained to the walls — but you wouldn't do *that*, would you?

— *Steve Poole*



Here are a few of the enemies you'll encounter in Blackthorne: (1) Andromedogs are turncoat Androthi; kill them unmercilessly. (2) The goblin-like Grag'ohrs come in three varieties the greenies are the easiest to kill. (3) The whip-wielding Whar'orks can strike from quite a distance. Use Hover Bombs to quickly destroy them. (4) Rock Beasts are impervious to damage when curled into a ball, but they're easy to dodge. (5) The tentacles of the Eeeker plant grab and hold you until the plant explodes.

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

86%

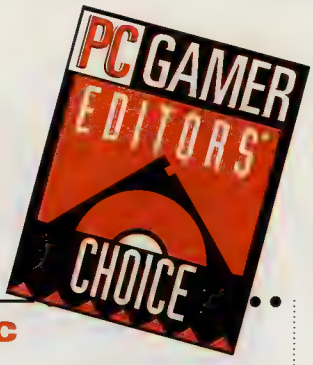
HIGHS: Great animation, cool music and sound effects, and plenty of bang-bang make this the best action-adventure since *Flashback*.

LOWS: You'll find yourself doing the same thing over and over again; weak enemy animations.

BOTTOM LINE: A great mix of gunplay and puzzles, sure to please any arcade fan.

CD-ROM

NHL Hockey '95



Category: Sports simulation
Developer: Pioneer Productions
Publisher: Electronic Arts, P.O. Box 7578, San Mateo, CA 94403.
(800) 245-4525

REQUIRED	WE RECOMMEND
CD-ROM drive; 386/33Mhz; 4MB RAM; 10MB hard-drive space; DOS 5.0 or later SVGA (512K RAM)	Double-speed CD-ROM drive; 486/25MHz; Sound Blaster or 100% compatible sound cards; Mouse and gamepad

M.S.R.P.: $59.95

While EA Sports' second PC hockey title is a great game, last year's followers may feel left out in the cold.

Has it already been a year since EA Sports brought *NHL Hockey* to the PC? Well, I guess it's true what they say about time flying when you're having fun. The release of EA Sports' cleverly named sequel, *NHL Hockey '95*, does coincide with the original's one-year anniversary — and made me realize that perhaps I've been having too much fun.

While the game is every bit as entertaining as its predecessor and does include a few new features, most of the improvements over last year's version are mainly in the presentation of setup and opening screens, and have no significant effect on gameplay. So is *NHL Hockey '95* merely a glitzier, updated version of the original? Not exactly, as one look at the rosters and player ratings will attest. Still, the one big gripe that can be lodged against *NHL '95* is that this is a lot of dough to pay for updated stats and prettier intro screens.

But if you haven't tried the original, then *NHL Hockey '95* is just the answer for those dull winter evenings. The entire program has been designed to convey the professional air of an actual sports broadcast. Team line-ups and statistical analyses are presented with television-style graphics and with actual photos for studio hosts and rink announcers; *NHL '95* could almost fill in for those canceled ESPN and Hockey Night in Canada telecasts. Catchy in-studio music gives way to authentic organ music once you take the ice, and a digitized stadium announcer gives the official calls on all goals and penalties.

This slick new image and great sound quality are made possible by the game's CD-ROM format, the biggest and most obvious change from the original. The CD replaces the four disks required to install *NHL Hockey*, but don't get *too* excited — you'll still need to set aside a cool 10MB of hard-drive space. The access time for the CD-ROM is minimal, though, and only becomes noticeable between periods and when retrieving statistical data.



Be sure to keep a fresh line on the ice at all times, or your players will look like their skating through mud.

Keyboard, mouse, and gamepads are supported, but if you intend to control players out on the ice a gamepad is essential. Passing, shooting, and checking commands are executed with the touch of a button, and skating is much quicker to learn than the real-life experience. Advanced techniques like laying down to block shots and a one-timer shot can be easily achieved with practice, and give you incredible control over your team's performance. Your teammates fill the lanes as real players would, so even if you can't see a linemate you can be fairly confident that he'll be there when you pass in that direction.

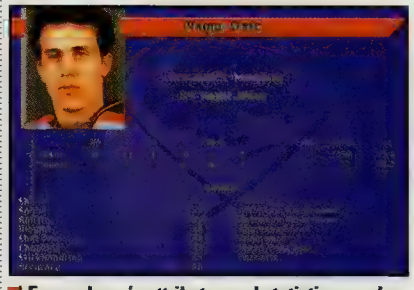


In the Central Registry, you can create free agents and adjust their attribute ratings in 16 categories to determine their on-ice effectiveness.

The only drawback to the arcade play is that once you've played the game long enough to develop the aforementioned skills — and master the sure-fire technique for scoring on a goalie one-on-one — it becomes clear that the game's artificial intelligence just can't keep up. And while the game can still be enjoyable to play, constantly winning by 7-1 margins takes a little fun out of the experience.

A point-and-click interface makes it simple to play an exhibition game, set up a league, edit lines for any team, or browse through several categories of statistics. Besides rosters, stats, and player ratings that are current through the end of last season, *NHL '95* also includes a new feature called the Central Registry which allows you to make modifications to the player databases. Thanks to the Registry, you can now swap players from one team to another, cut guys from the roster, and add free agents. You can even create free agents from scratch and customize everything from their names and jersey numbers to their aggressiveness and agility ratings. Unfortunately, the Central Registry is essentially the only addition to *NHL Hockey* that affects actual play.

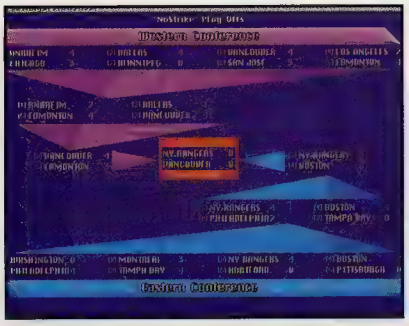
As in the original, up to 26 people can participate in league play (one for each



Every player's attributes and statistics can be accessed, along with portraits for select members of each club.



New checking, blocking, and goalie animations give this sequel more realism than its predecessor.



Playoff series pit any two teams in one-, three-, five-, or seven-game wars en route to the coveted Stanley Cup.



Your pre-game coaching duties include dressing and scratching players until you arrive at a total of 18 skaters and 2 goalies.

NHL club), and players can export their team to a floppy disk for use on other PCs with *NHL '95*. The program simulates game results and stats for all match-ups that don't involve a human player, and compiles team standings and a list of league leaders in a variety of categories. A playoff option allows you to bypass the league's lengthy 84-game season and get right to the fight for the Stanley Cup. An instant replay feature not only lets you review the last several seconds of the action, but it also lets you save your favorites to a league or playoff highlight reel.

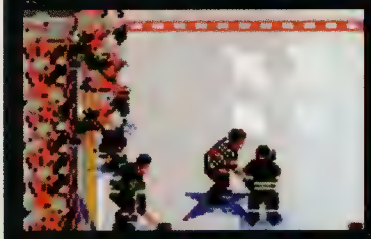
If you're a fan of sports games and never experienced last year's *NHL Hockey*, you should seriously consider adding *NHL Hockey '95* to your library. It's everything the original was and a little more. But for owners of *NHL Hockey*, the "little more" may not be enough to convince them to break open their piggy banks — at least not yet.

—Doug Brumley

If It's In The Game...

The programmers for *NHL Hockey '95* really did their homework in order to live up to EA Sports' slogan, "if it's in the game, it's in the game." Now, you might think that the lack of fighting in *NHL Hockey '95* may cast a shadow of doubt on the claim, but the NHL effectively tied EA Sports' hands when it told the company it would revoke the NHL license if blood or fighting was included in the game.

But even with that aspect of the game missing, there are still plenty of detailed animations to really give the action a realistic appearance. Pay close attention while playing, and you'll notice that even the smallest events of a real-life hockey game are captured in *NHL Hockey '95*.



Players replace lost fluids in front of their bench during play stoppages.



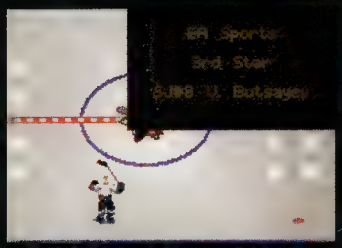
Big body checks can quickly send players over the boards and into the bench.

The referee actually signals each penalty for the official scorer...





...but if you don't like the call you can let him know about it!



The selection of the game's three stars is a long-time hockey tradition.



Injuries force you to rework your lines to fill in the holes.





Each game is presented as an actual hockey telecast, complete with TV-style graphics and still photos of broadcast anchors that decorate option screens.

PCG

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Professional presentation and great game play.

90%

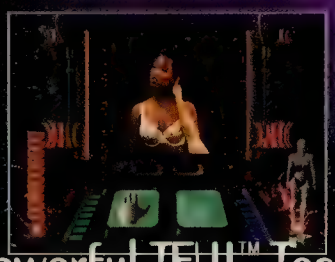
LOWS: There's not much other than improved game presentation and stats to separate this from the original *NHL Hockey*.

BOTTOM LINE: If you don't own the original, this is as good as it gets; if you do, try before you buy.

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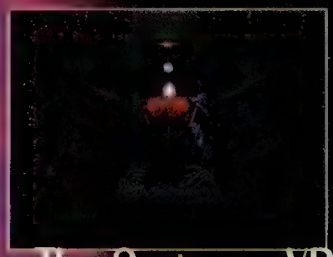
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It's All in the Way You Look at It

Neil Randall



This month, Neil rolls up his sleeves and tackles one of the most debated topics in roleplaying: Which works best in an RPG, the first- or third-person perspective? And now, here's Neil!

The idea behind roleplaying is that you take on the persona of a character in a story. A good FRP lets you get to know your character well enough that they become individuals in your mind (check out *Betrayal at Krondor*, *Ravenloft: Stradh's Possession*, or *Faerie Tale Adventure* from a zillion years ago), and a good FRP also gives you a worthwhile story for that character to play around in (*Krondor* again, *Challenge of the Five Realms*, *Ultima VI* and *VII*). Character, plot — what else could you ask for?

Well, let's look at perspective. You know, the stuff you learned in your ninth-grade English classes. First-person perspective, third-person perspective, the strengths and merits of each. On the off chance you can't quite remember the distinction, in a first-person perspective the story is told using the first-person pronoun "I." You see the story through the eyes of usually one character only (although this varies), and the story you get depends on that character's senses, thoughts, and feelings. Third-person narratives are much more common. He thought this, she said this, they did this — the author can get inside the mind of any number of characters, but there's no "I". I've oversimplified all this, but basically that's the difference, at least in books.

But what about FRPs? Do the same differences hold? Again, this matters because the idea behind role-playing is for you to play a character in a story. So the story-telling techniques of one proven medium (books) should at least be useful to story-tellers in another (games). Are they? As it turns out, yes, but the effects are quite different.

FRPs are divided into two major types: first-person and third-person. First-person games are almost always labeled as such (just read the back of the box), but third-person is usually called "overhead perspective" or something similar. In a first-person FRP, you see the action through the eyes of your characters. In fact, you don't see the characters themselves unless you call up the inventory displays. Overhead perspective gives you a view of the entire party as seen from somewhere above them (the sky, a rooftop, whatever). Here you're looking down, god-like, on the entire party all at once, and you play the game from that perspective rather than theirs. Some games combine the two perspectives (*Realms of Arkania* and *Death Knights of Krynn*, for instance), giving you a first-person perspective while inside towns and dungeons, and a third-person perspective when moving across a strategic map.

The venerated grandfather of computer FRPs, *Wizardry*, established first-person as the standard. *Ultima* did the same for third-person. In recent years, however, first-person has clearly won out as the perspective of choice. The colorful, appealing, first-person graphics of *Bard's Tale*, and later *Dungeon Master* (and its clone, *Eye of the Beholder*), ensured the success of that perspective, and more recent offerings such as *Ultima Underworld* and *Legends of Valour* increased its popularity even more. And *Ultima Underworld* begat *Doom*, and *Doom* begat legions.

The charm of first-person is that it shows you the surroundings through the characters' eyes; the disadvantage is that it focuses things so minutely that you can easily lose sight of the storyline. You spend so much time peering around corners, unlocking doors, and investigating every little item you find lying in the corner that the real goals of your quest become secondary. It's almost as if Indiana Jones had spent the bulk of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* examining and *then* battling every single snake that appeared, rather than racing through a particular scene and into the next part of the plot.

Elsewhere in this issue, I review SSI's *Wake of the Ravager*, the second installment of the Dark Sun series. It's a good game, very good at times, and like *Dark Sun* quite refreshing in its third-person perspective. But for some reason, third-person games tend to get shunted aside in favor of the more popular first-person. From my standpoint, it's easier to keep your mind on goals and strategy in a third-person game, because you're not forced to spend all your time checking under every doormat for a key. As a result, game elements such as interaction with NPCs or learning where to go next take on a much greater significance. You have to keep concentrating on your mission, because if you don't you end up wandering around looking stupid. And losing, in the long run.

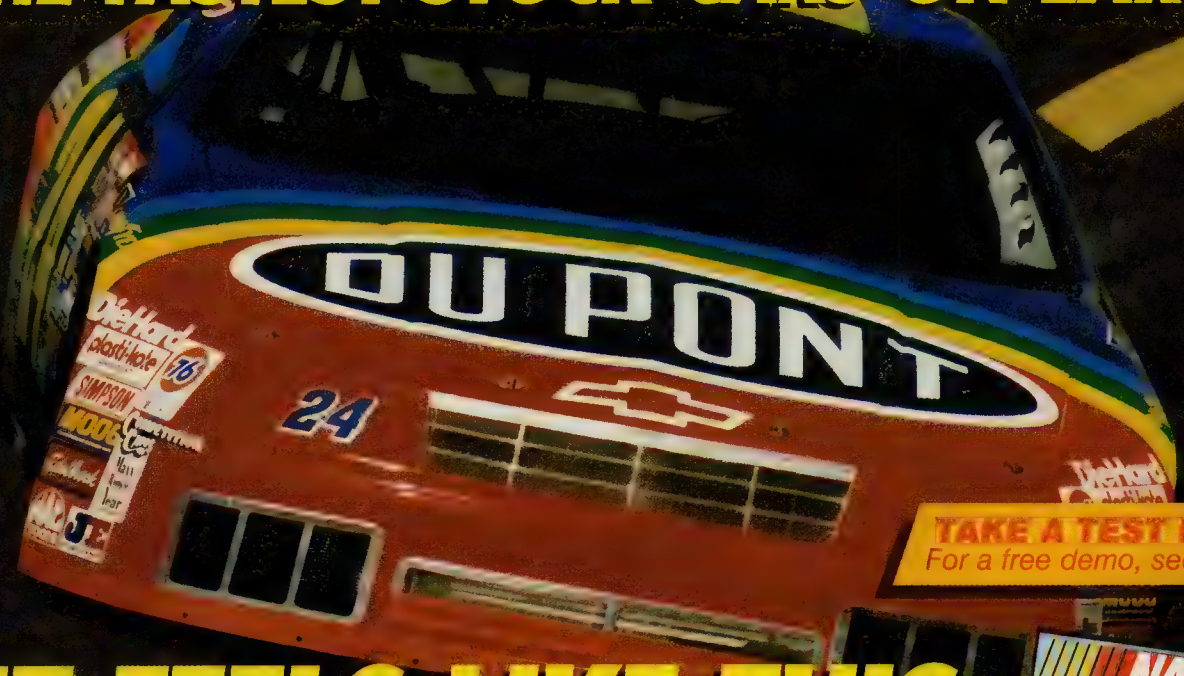
In books, most of the great plots have been told from the third-person perspective — and there's a reason for that. Stories told from the first-person quite naturally limit what gets told; they must if they're to be realistic at all, because no one person can see everything (despite what some guys might tell you). So the stories become highly focused on the characters themselves. Third-person narratives can focus on plot development and the overall structure of the story as a whole. While characters are crucial, they're fascinating as much for the way they fit that structure as for themselves. Again, this is oversimplifying. But there it is.

Computer FRPs have a huge disadvantage over books. Because you're playing the characters, they don't really get fleshed out. They become pawns at your disposal, and only in the rare (and extremely welcome) game do they take on personalities. This is especially true of first-person perspectives, where every character's viewpoint tends to be identical. This isn't nearly as true of third-person games, where individual characters can be represented by unique icons, sounds, and features.

Third-person games are much more capable than first-person games of giving us worthwhile plots, and that's why I prefer them by a considerable margin. I hope the huge popularity of the first-person perspective doesn't stop designers — and storytellers — from doing more with the third-person perspective.

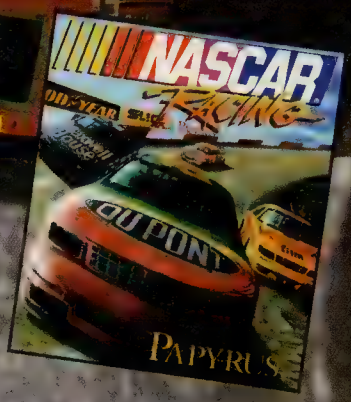
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Product Information Number 129

Tee Time

After Electronic Arts' *PGA Tour Golf 486* knocked my argyle socks off, I started wondering what the other contenders for the computer golf crown were up to. Obviously, Access and Accolade (the powers behind *Links 386 Pro* and *Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition* respectively) aren't standing still. Both companies will spend the winter working on their own next-generation golf sims — and the way these games are shaping up, I can't wait to see the finished products. The developers for each company are taking the strong points of their existing products and building on them: Where *Nicklaus* had a course editor that turned computer golfers across the country into instant course architects, the next one will feature an even *stronger* course editor. Access, on the other hand, set the graphics standard for all computer games with *Links 386*; the next *Links* promises to look even better.

Links Pentium

Now that Access has wrapped up *Under a Killing Moon*, the developers are turning their full attention to the next installment in the immensely popular *Links* series. The working title is *Links Pentium*, but that won't be the final name.

There's a four-by-eight bulletin board at the Access office, literally covered with suggestions from players — a wish list for the next generation of Links golf. My number one wish? Tournament play. "That has been bandied around," said Jim Slade, a marketing executive with Access. "There is that capability, but to what extent we'll implement it I don't know. You can promise them the moon, and then come up with New Jersey. There are a lot of things we'd *like* to do, but some of them are just not physically possible."

What *will* be included in the new *Links*? Here are a few tidbits to whet your appetite. *Links Pentium* will have fly-bys of the entire course as well as tours of the facilities, including the clubhouse. That's *inside* the clubhouse, mind you. "We want to give the ambiance of the course itself," Slade said. "Golfers like not only mechanics, but the feel of the countryside and the amenities of the club itself."

The main game engine will be basically the same. No problem there: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. But if you thought Links couldn't look any more realistic, think again. *Links for Pentium* will jump from the 640x480 resolution of *386* to 1024x768. "You'll feel like you can reach down and pick up a blade of grass," Slade said.

One of the most pleasant features of *Links 386* was the ability to upgrade courses from the original *Links: The Challenge of Golf* to the new format. The new *Links* will also allow players to convert courses from older formats. Of course, some of the new features — the fly-bys and the clubhouse tours — won't be available on those converted courses.

What will it take to run the new *Links*? Well, it's not being referred to as *Links Pentium* for nothing. Actually, Slade said the game will run on a 486, or even a 386, but you can expect some s-l-o-w screen redraws. On a Pentium computer, "it will be almost instantaneous. A lot of people are now buying the newer machines, and they want software that can take advantage of that performance," Slade said.

The Golden Bear

The developers over at Accolade are well into their own new golf sim, *Jack Nicklaus Golf: Golden Bear Edition*. This one promises to be a lot more than just an upgrade to *Nicklaus Signature Edition*, an enduring game that still holds up well despite its outdated graphics.

While the graphics in *Signature Edition* can't measure up to those in even *Links 386*, that's about to change. The new Jack sim will run in Windows at a resolution of 640x400 with 256 colors, according to Daniel Jeung, director of product marketing at Sport Accolade. Why Windows? "Almost every new computer system sold into the home market has Windows installed," Jeung said. "It's the operating system of choice."

Accolade will release *Golden Bear Edition* on floppy first, then on CD-ROM. The floppy version will include three sets of player animations: male and female players, and Jack himself. The CD version include several more, with special animations for Black, Asian, Older, and Very Young golfers.

Two Nicklaus-designed courses — Colleton River in Hilton Head, S.C. and the Country Club of the South in Georgia — will be included in the game. And there will be an improved golf course architect program, though Accolade has yet to decide if it will be included in the game or sold as a separate product. If the course architect program is sold separately, it will be combined with the game in the CD version.

The new course builder promises to be a leap ahead of the excellent editor in *Signature Edition*. "In the old version, you designed 18 separate holes. Now you'll be designing a complete course, so you can zoom into one hole or view the whole course. You'll also be able to cut and paste from one hole to another, so if you like a bunker, you can paste it wherever you like," Jeung told me.

"We're still going with standard stroke play, skins, and match play," he continued. "But we're also looking at other games people play on the course, like best ball and scramble, just to make it more fun."

While Access will try again to push the envelope, Accolade is aiming for a broader audience; minimum hardware looks to be a 386/33 with 4 megs of RAM.

And finally, some *very* good news: Both *Links Pentium* and *Golden Bear Edition* will include modem play. It's about time, too, since computer golfing is such an ideal activity for those rainy days.


Lee Buchanan

Electronic Arts' *PGA Tour Golf 486* isn't the only new links simulation on the way. Lee takes a look at two other great golf titles that should give EA a real run for its money.

PCG

Damon and Dynamix do Desert Island Discs

T. Liam McDonald



This month, Tom bares all by revealing his love for over-rated bands from the seventies and space-saving CD-ROM conversions of classic air-combat sims. Talk about a split personality....

You know the game: If you were trapped on a desert island with only three CDs (remember when it was albums?), what would they be? For me that was a tough call, but I always narrowed it down to Lennon's Plastic Ono Band, Sabbath's Sabbath Bloody Sabbath, and Floyd's Wish You Were Here. But, hell, the albums you'd have to leave behind would hurt bad.

Now what if those desert island CDs were CD-ROMs? Were there any that I just couldn't live without?

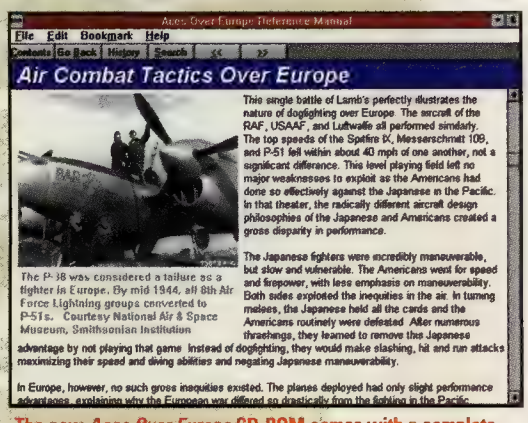
Well, there are now, thanks to Dynamix. My three desert island CD-ROMs are all from Damon Slye's "Great Warplanes Series," featuring *Aces of the Pacific*, *Aces Over Europe*, and *Red Baron* with *A-10 Tank Killer* (at least until *Civilization* CD-ROM comes out), and man, they are killers.

We gotta get something straight here: These are some of the best flight simulators ever created. Period, end of subject — and sit down, all you *Falcon 3.0*'ers. Granted, every single nuance of every plane isn't modeled down to the micron and millisecond, but what other sims have wrapped beautiful graphics and lush sound in a package featuring a stunning range of action, a perfect career mode, incredibly evocative historical missions, and some of the smoothest control ever available? And these three disks have it *all*, demanding only a modest amount of hard drive space, and even come with online Windows manuals, complete with illos (don't worry, printed manuals are also included).

First off the block is the full *Red Baron* package, including a solid mission builder and graphics that still look good after several years. Fly any of 33 fragile aircraft from the Great War, from either the English or German side. Go balloon bustin'! Take the controls from Captain Roy Brown and flame the Red Baron! Knock a lumbering Zeppelin from the sky! More than that, the *Red Baron* CD comes bundled with the complete *A-10 Tank Killer* as a bonus. This one shows its age graphically a little more than *Baron*, but the "Warthog" is one mean machine, and the sim is still a lot of fun.

If World War II action is more your speed, both *Aces of the Pacific* and *Aces over Europe* deliver in spades. The *AOTP* CD includes all of the planes and hypothetical missions found on the *World War II: 1946* add-on disk. From Pearl Harbor to the planned-but-never-executed invasion of Japan, this one never stops, and is still my personal favorite among the "Great Warplanes" games. That's not to say *Aces Over Europe* isn't a standout program: the graphics (especially in the game's 400 x 200 "Tall Res" mode) are even better than in *AOTP*, the flight models are more authentic, and you get the pleasure of flying missions from D-Day onwards.

All these games play fluidly from the CD-ROM, and they even install a Windows shell for those who like their flight sims with crappy frame rates. Oh, and by the way, Damon — don't think we didn't notice you never created mission builders for *AOTP* or *AOE*.



The new *Aces Over Europe* CD-ROM comes with a complete online, illustrated reference.



A dramatic mountain backdrop sets the scene for the striking *Links 386 Pro* desert Course Bighorn.

Bighorn!

The stream of new course disks for *Links 386 Pro* has, unfortunately, slowed to a trickle as Access works on the next *Links* incarnation. But Access still has a few gems in mind for us, and the latest *Links Championship Course, Bighorn*, is yet another outstanding addition to the family.

Bighorn is easily the most dramatic course since *Mauna Kea*. Carved from the desert rock overlooking stark mountains and gorgeous valleys, its 18 holes provide one startling vista after another. Cacti, desert scrub, and a preponderance of unusual vegetation flank each fairway, making for roughs that are well-nigh impossible to escape in most instances. The natural rock formations are used to maximum effect — they thwart any direct approach to a hole, and the sharp drops in altitude (some as much as 100 feet!) will call for a keen eye and careful placement.

On the whole, the front nine seems a touch trickier than the back, with a painfully tight drive on the number two; a short, boxed-in fourth; and a long, killer sixth that once claimed three of my balls before I even got out of the tee box! The back nine still holds plenty of challenge, however, and though you'll find fewer rocks in your way, there are some delicate placements on holes such as the 10th, 16th (with its "goal post" cacti), and 17th. The mix of long and short holes, with both tight

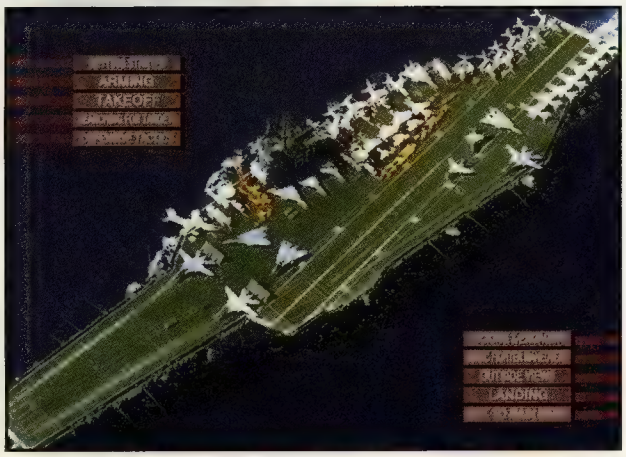
and open fairways, makes it hard to develop a rhythm or strategy at Bighorn. This, mixed with some lovely vistas and unique challenges, makes *Bighorn* — along with *Pebble Beach* and *Mauna Kea* — one of my top three *Links* course.

MicroProse and Sierra Go Disc Crazy!

MicroProse have been busy CD-ROM porters of late, with their best new title clearly being *Fleet Defender Gold*. This sharp, effective simulation of the F-14 Tomcat has not only been brought to CD-ROM, but has been given a terrific number of enhancements. Video and audio footage from both the Department of Defense and *Aviation Week* (including a dramatic MiG shoot-down, complete with cursing pilots) add a solid multimedia twist to *Fleet Defender*, while such elements as an interactive cockpit tour, a "Flight School," and various online references help the new pilot learn the ropes painlessly. Two new theaters of war —Korea and the Indian Ocean — have also been added, providing six new campaigns. Plus MicroProse has added a complete mission builder, allowing you to create your own scenarios from scratch. There's a lot of value in this CD-ROM, and it's one of the few that's worth checking out even if you own the original. This is probably the most effectively employed online resource I've seen for *any* flight sim.



MicroProse's CD-ROM ports of *Dragon-Sphere* and *X-COM* look pretty tame by comparison. *Dragon-Sphere* features full voice support, and for the most part it works pretty well. *X-COM* hasn't been enhanced at all, but at least it takes up a little less hard-drive space. Keep an eye out for *Subwar 2050* and *1942: Pacific Air War* to be on CD-ROM soon.



***Fleet Defender Gold* sports a thorough tutorial, guided tour, and history.**

Sierra On-Line has always brought their titles to CD-ROM with effective enhancements, from *Leisure Suit Larry* to the King's Quest series. Now, they're cleaning out their closets to give gamers some truly value-packed CD-ROM bundles. The first to be released is the *King's Quest Collection*. Shipped on two CDs, *KQC* is simply a bonanza for fans of the best-selling series. This set has it all, with full-talkie versions of every title in the series — from the primitive graphics of the first *KQ* right up to the narrative *KQVI*. More than that, they've put quizzes, demos, interviews, and "Nick's Picks" (checkers and backgammon games) on the remaining disc space. There are several Video for Windows files featuring interviews with the development team, and even a trailer for *KQ VII*. This is a great example of the bonuses game companies can give CD-ROM players when they put their minds to it.



All the King's Quest games are now on one CD, including a CD-ROM version of *KQ VI*. *KQ VII* will start on CD-ROM.



***The King's Quest Collection* comes with interviews with Roberta Williams and the KQ development team.**

Fleet Defender Gold is one of the few CD-ROM titles that's worth a look even if you own the original....

Bug Patches

Contact game publishers for bug-patch availability.

***Air Warrior* v.1.16B Joystick Patch:** Makes some minor modifications to a timing loop in the joystick routine, correcting a problem that occurs with some game ports. It also helps solve some video sync problems and lost key presses when *Air Warrior* is running at high frame rates (Kesmai).

***Quarantine* DOS4GW.EXE Update:** A cleaner-running version of the DOS driver. There is also a **Quarantine Setup Update Patch**, which fixes problems with the Thrustmaster Steering wheel (Gametek).

***TIE Fighter*:** This patch corrects hanging notes when using general MIDI or Roland music. It also adds direct support for the Ensoniq SoundScape sound board and allows Pro Audio Spectrum users to use the 16-bit DMA setting without rapid speech (LucasArts).

PCG

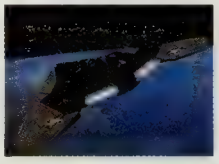
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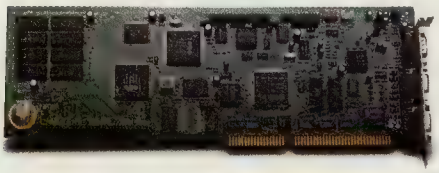
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Two Sticks and Some Pedals

I don't care if you've got the fastest Pentium, with the fastest CD-ROM drive and video card ever made. If you're using a floppy old joystick (or worse yet, your cursor keys) to fly that hot new flight sim, you're just not gaming.

On the plus side, there's no shortage of joysticks on the market; on the down side, a lot of the sticks out there are just crap. If you're not careful, it's all too easy to go home with something that's not much better than what you had in the first place. And then you're *still* not gaming.

Fortunately, a couple of *good* new choices are now available: the Wingman and Wingman Extreme, from Logitech. The Wingman is your basic two-button joystick, while the Extreme has the hat and multiple, configurable buttons that flight-sim fans crave.

If you're like me, the first thing you'll notice about both these sticks is their solid, quality feel. They're mounted on thick, weighted bases that keep marvelously still on the desk during even the most grueling maneuvers, and the sticks themselves are molded to fit your hand perfectly. You know that satisfying "thunk" of an expensive car door closing? The Wingman sticks, with their excellent design and quality feel, remind me of that.

The standard Wingman carries a suggested retail price of $39.95, which should translate to an actual price of about $30. There are a lot of basic sticks in that range, and their quality varies wildly. But I'd have to say that the Wingman is the best low-cost stick available, easily beating about 80% of its competition. What about the other 20%? It seems to me I'd say that they're not so much better or worse than the Wingman as they are different. The Wingman is a big-handled, molded affair, and I know some gamers who just don't care for that type of grip. And the Wingman has a pretty short throw in all directions, and can take a little getting used to.

That short throw is especially noticeable in the case of the Wingman Extreme. It's obvious competitors are the Thrustmaster FCS and CH Products Flight Stick Pro, and chances are you've at least tried these two models if you're looking at the Extreme. Both of those sticks allow a lot more throw than the Extreme, especially the Flight Stick Pro. All three are good sticks, though, and each has its own personality. So ultimately, which one you go with will probably come down to personal taste. Me? I'd take the Extreme.

Oh yeah, and if cost is a factor, consider this: The Extreme, in all it's solidity, will retail for only $69.95 — and that means right around 55 to 60 clams to you and me!



Some Pedals, Vicar?

OK, so now you've gone out and bought a good joystick. You think you're all set, so you hop in that P-51 Mustang and take to the skies. But those damn Gerries just keep shooting you down, and you can't ever seem to get on their tails! Don't despair, friends. You just need some rudder pedals, that's all.

If you've never really messed with rudders in a flight sim (and believe it or not, a lot of PC pilots never have), then you're cheating yourself out of a big part of flying. In fact, most of the maneuvering you have to do to take out those bogeys *requires* that you skillfully employ the old rudders.

Even if you're a keyboard rudder rider, pedals will greatly enhance your flying enjoyment. Because you're controlling the things with your feet as you man the stick and scan the horizon, you'll actually *feel* more a part of the plane — and that kind of realism is *always* a good thing.

The latest thing in PC pedals is CH Products' Pro Pedals, and its main competitor is the Thrustmaster Rudder Control System. Now, there's no doubt that the RCS is impressive. It's a big, heavy, metal affair, and impressively rugged. The Pro Pedals are smaller and don't *look* as sturdy as the Thrustmaster kit, but they're actually very well-made. If you've used the RCS, you'll notice (and at first dislike) the fact that the footpads on the Pro Pedals are much closer together than on the RCS. But stick it out, because you'll get used to it pretty quickly. And once you do, you'll find that the Pro Pedals feel really good.


CH Products' Pro Pedals will put you in control.

Because the CH Pedals are much smaller, they'll fit underneath just about anyone's computer desk; the width of the Thrustmaster pedals provides stability, but it can be tough finding enough room for them. So from a practicality standpoint, the Pro Pedals have a bit of an edge.

But there's one area where the Pro Pedals CH wins hands-down. In addition to sliding back and forth for use as rudder controls, the each of the footpads on the Pro Pedals can be depressed, and thus used as a gas and brake pedal combo in racing sims like *IndyCar Racing*, *NASCAR Racing*, and *World Circuit*. They still slide back and forth when you're using them in this way, though. Some kind of lock-down mechanism would have been nice. But again, you'll get used to it.

The Pro Pedals carry an MSRP of $139.95 — money well spent if convenient realism is your desire.

The days when your keyboard was sufficient to fly your favorite flight sim are gone. Today, a good joystick — and rudder pedals — are a must if you're to get the most from your sims.

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Product Information Number 145

CD-ROM Drives: The Basics

It looks like CD-ROM has finally made it. Browsing around in computer stores, it seems that every PC that costs more than $1000 includes a CD-ROM drive. And that makes sense; popular games like *Myst* and *Rebel Assault* are only available on CD-ROM, and some game publishers have publicly discussed plans to abandon floppy-based games completely.

If your PC doesn't have a CD-ROM drive, chances are you'll be getting one soon. And if it does, you might be wondering whether a newer, faster drive would improve your system's performance. Or maybe you're thinking about getting a new PC, and the CD-ROM drive is one of the many components you have to consider when comparing different models and configurations. Whatever your motivation, it's important to know which features affect a CD-ROM's performance and which ones are just matters of convenience.

When you just need to get data off a CD-ROM as fast as possible, all that matters is how quickly the data passes under the drive's laser playback head. Double-speed drives spin CD-ROMs twice as fast as the first generation of drives did, raising the peak transfer rate from 150KB to 300KB per second. That's an important improvement, and double-speed drives are standard equipment now on even the least expensive systems.

It might seem that if the disc spins even faster, your programs will run even more quickly — but that's not always true. Triple- and quad-speed drives are available, and the extra speed certainly helps — but not to the same degree as the original jump from single to double-speed. In part, that's because CPU and video performance is limited, and that in turn limits how quickly the rest of the system can handle the data that comes off the disc. Besides, most software designers have worked hard to make their CD-ROMs run well on single and double-speed drives, and in many cases the programs just don't *need* a faster drive to run smoothly.

While disc speeds have attracted a lot of attention, a drive's seek time is at least as important as its raw data transfer rate as far as games and interactive multimedia are concerned23. What's seek time? As you play a CD-ROM-based game, the drive has to skip around to fetch data from different parts of the disc. The seek time measures how quickly it can move from one place to another, and current drives' seek times range from less than 200 milliseconds to over a half a second. So a CD-ROM drive often takes more time to seek over to the next chunk of data than it does to read the data once it gets there. Since the drive can't read any data at all during this time, a fast seek time is crucial to avoid dead time in interactive programs.

CD-ROM drives also have different amounts of buffer memory inside, between 32KB and 1MB of RAM. These buffers store data from the disc before it goes to the CPU. Large buffers don't seem to make a big difference in benchmarks that measure drive performance, but these benchmarks measure raw speed rather than smoothness. A large RAM buffer hasn't been shown to be a big factor in performance, but it's part of the package when you look at higher-priced drives, and it can't possibly hurt.

There are some other compatibility issues that don't affect a drive's speed per se, but they're important for certain applications. To read images off a Kodak PhotoCD disc, the drive has to be able to handle discs that use the CD-ROM/XA format and multisession recording. Almost all do nowadays, but it's worth your while to look for Photo-CD compatibility to be sure.

As far as performance factors go, that's about it. But another important thing to consider is the drive's interface. It doesn't matter whether a drive uses SCSI, IDE, or some proprietary interface to connect to the rest of the PC, since CD-ROM drives aren't fast enough to test the throughput limits of any of these interfaces. On most multimedia PCs, the CD-ROM drive connects to a controller port on the sound card, so it might be best to look for an interface that's compatible with the sound card you want to use.

But the interface of the future is probably IDE, the same connection that's used to attach the hard disk in most PCs. The new Enhanced IDE standard includes an "AT Attachment Packet Interface" for hanging CD-ROMs, tape drives, and other components on an IDE cable, which eliminates the need for separate CD-ROM controller cards.

The SCSI interface is the standard for attaching hard disks on Macintoshes and engineering workstations, and top-of-the-line CD-ROM drives have traditionally employed a SCSI interface, so SCSI enjoys a certain amount of snob appeal. If you already have a SCSI hard disk in your PC, or if your sound card includes a SCSI host interface, then you're all set. Otherwise, you can expect to pay at least $70 extra for even a cheap interface card to go with a SCSI drive. In comparison, some of the least expensive CD-ROM drives include a proprietary, non-SCSI interface card at no extra cost.

For between $150 and $200, you can get a double-speed drive with a seek time of around 300ms and a proprietary interface. It'll work reasonably well with any CD-ROM game around, and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you didn't pay any more for the drive than you had to. Or you can spend three or four times that much for a top-notch, quad-speed drive with a seek time under 200ms, and be secure in the knowledge that it's doing everything possible to enhance your gaming experience. Really, the choice is yours. Compare all the facts and features, do a little shopping, and I'll bet you can find the right CD-ROM drive for a lot less than you might think.

PCG

Tim Victor



With the push toward CD-ROM — and the *PC Gamer* CD-ROM Edition — Tim's been getting a lot of mail from eager CD-ROM buyers looking for guidance.

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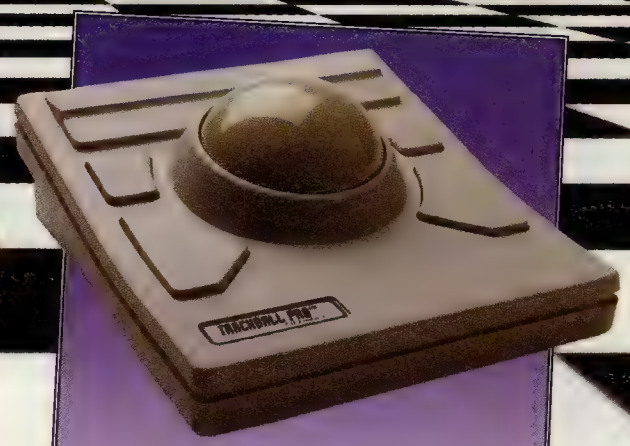


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Product Information Number 93

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Alliance Interactive Comes on Strong in 1995

It's always column-worthy news when a new software developer enters the PC gaming field with a strong, up-front commitment to wargames and military simulations. Since its founding in January, 1994, Alliance Interactive Software, Inc. has attempted to establish a solid market presence by issuing budget-priced editions of some late-1980's simulations that originally appeared under the Epyx trademark (*Sub Battle*, *Fokker Triplane*, and *PT Boat* — not great stuff, but not awful) and by issuing an enlarged and improved version of *Harpoon Classic* for DOS CD-ROM and Windows CD-ROM.

Perhaps even more interesting to readers of this column are the new company's plans for 1995, which include some of the most interesting titles I've heard about in a long time. Recently, I interviewed Alliance's founder and CEO, Gordon Walton, to gain some insight into what makes the new company tick — and what its goals are in the field of wargaming.

Walton has gathered an impressive roster of talent at Alliance's Plantation, Florida headquarters, including experienced developers and designers who have worked for such industry leaders as Dynamix, Broderbund, Electronic Arts and Three-Sixty. Walton is especially happy to have enlisted as Marketing Director Mr. Steve Greene, formerly CEO of Mallard Software and one of the industry's most savvy experts on the flight sim genre.

As for Walton himself, his credentials are impressive. He's been a computer game designer since 1978, and has worked on such respected games as *Orbiter* and *PT-109* for Spectrum HoloByte, *Sub Battle* for Epyx, and the original *Harpoon* for Three-Sixty. On the now-legendary birth pangs of that game, Walton recalled, "That was my first *big* wargame project, and it was brutal. By the time the struggle was over, I frankly didn't think it would sell more than 30,000 copies. I was, of course, quite wrong."

His ambition for Alliance Software is not modest: "Within three years, we intend to be the industry leader in both strategy games and simulations. Our first goal is to publish high-quality software (of course, everybody says that), but the other goal is to make sure our software is readily accessible to the broadest range of players."

Walton sees the PC gaming market expanding on all sides, as sexy new technology lures previously resistant customers and as the first generation of Nintendo fans graduates to the PC platform. "I think both the simulations and the strategy genres have grown a bit stale, and cater too much to the high-end players. We're going to publish products that will appeal to entry-level players, while still satisfying the grognards. It's a fine line, of course, but with our combined experience, we're confident we can do it."

Take flight simulations, which Walton cited by way of example. They've become so complex, with such steep learning curves, that they scare away as many players as they attract. Two of Alliance's 1995 releases will focus on this situation in particular. One, for experienced flight sim pilots, will be *Air Warrior II*, marketed in partnership with Kesmai. It'll be a much enhanced version of the already successful *SVGA Air Warrior*.

The other, *Sky Warrior*, will be a unique entry-level sim based on the real-life laser tag aerial combat school of the same name, which has been extensively covered recently on various television news programs.

Turning from the sky to the sea, Alliance will also publish *War Patrol*, a WWII submarine simulation that will incorporate the *Harpoon* "battleset" system to recreate campaigns in both the Atlantic and Pacific. It will also be the first submarine sim to pay serious attention to the Japanese sub fleet. "Their I-boats, for instance, were pretty good weapons, but they never achieved what they should have because the Imperial Navy had such a poor doctrine of submarine warfare."

Also coming in 1995 is *Big Three*, a WWII game of grand strategy that allows the player to make sweeping strategic decisions and put whole armies in motion. The game does not go down to the regimental level of detail, but it will not lack drama or action, Walton promised.

Perhaps the biggest Alliance title for 1995 is one that Walton was reluctant to discuss in much detail. Just the basic description — "*Harpoon* for World War Two" — is enough to whet most gamers' appetites, however. The title is *Command at Sea*, and it's based on a just-completed rule set devised by the inimitable Larry Bond, who in this columnist's opinion is the best practitioner of the "military thriller" literary genre.

Finally, I asked Walton about the PC version of *TacOps*, a professionally-developed game of modern tactical combat from Arsenal Publishing, one of Alliance's affiliate companies. Having read a lot of favorable comment about the Mac version of *TacOps* (already being hailed as "the *Harpoon* of small-unit combat games"), I had long been anxious to get my hands on the PC version.

"Unfortunately, the Windows version has slipped, and is now not expected until the second quarter of 1995. It'll be worth waiting for, though, because its realism and authenticity are outstanding. We're very proud of that game."

From what I've learned about Alliance's ambitious product line-up, and from CEO Walton's obvious enthusiasm and commitment to the wargaming genre, I would say that Alliance will have a *lot* to be proud of in the coming year. Stay tuned.

PCG


William R. Trotter

Always on the lookout for new wargaming opportunities, the General decided to find out what newcomers Alliance Interactive are working on for the coming year.

When You Were Just A Child They Abandoned You On A Hillside, Stole Your Kingdom & Kidnapped Your Mom!

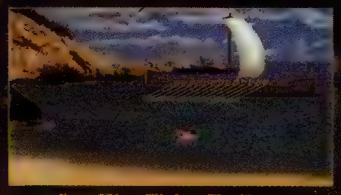
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The Big Picture

Heidi E. H. Aycock



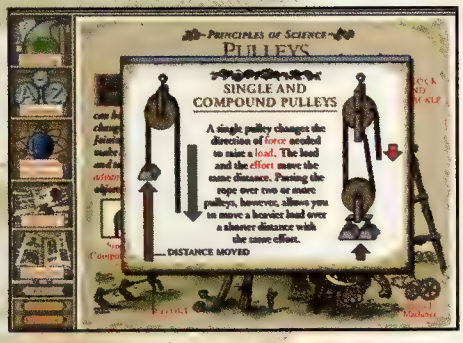
The thing about cliches is they usually hit the nail right on the head. They may be old as dirt or dull as dishwater, but they do speak volumes. Like "You can't see the forest for the trees." The meaning of that cliche was never as clear to me as it was this fall. While working on a piece for *TV Guide*, I spent a month looking at about 40 pieces of educational software. To me that's just like a forest, because I usually see only five or six trees — er, I mean packages — each month.

When you're evaluating just a few programs, the ones that distinguish themselves stick out like a sore thumb — even though they may not be outstanding in the broad field of educational software. The best of a small batch may not rival even the year's average packages.

I always try to put the educational titles I review in perspective, comparing them to older packages to see how they measure up, and noting any trends that might indicate the kinds of advances we can hope for in the future. But after wandering through that forest, I think that now I can do a better job.

First, I can do a better job because I've seen some nearly perfect titles. Some are enormous programs that take up most of a CD-ROM; others are small. But each of these prime specimens works beautifully in every way. The CD-ROM version of *The Way Things Work*, for example, is perhaps the best software — educational or otherwise — I've ever seen. Better than *Tetris* seemed so many moons ago. Better than *Sim City* when I first saw it. Better than *Lemmings*, *The Incredible Machine*, *Populous*, or *Kid Pix* when they were new. These were the groundbreakers, the darlings, and the shining stars of the industry — and here's another.

The Way Things Work, from Doris Kindersley Multimedia, is based on David Macaulay's popular book about machines and the scientific principles underlying them, and built on a hypermedia engine. *The Way Things Work* lets users explore topics in a number of different ways, and from many angles. Each screen will appeal to people who learn best by *reading* about a concept, as well as people who need to *see* a concept at work. Consider the section on the pulley, for example. After reading how a pulley works, I moved on to the inset picture labeled "Single and Compound Pulleys." When I clicked on the single pulley, the machine raised a small weight and then the program showed how the distance pulled on one side was equal to the distance the weight was raised on the other. Clicking on the compound pulley showed how the distance pulled on one side was *greater* than the distance the weight was raised. After closing that picture, I opened another which explained that the greater the difference between the distance pulled and the distance the weight was raised, the less effort was required. I was fascinated, and had to explore the related machines — escalators, elevators, cranes — that were mentioned. My husband finally had to kick me off the computer so he could get some work done.



Beautifully drawn and clearly written, *The Way Things Work* explains hundreds of ordinary gadgets and gizmos as well as the scientific principles underlying each machine.



Not even Mickey Mouse can save *Follow the Reader*, a program plagued by choppy graphics and limited interactivity.

Seeing *The Way Things Work* reminded me how I felt when I first saw those earlier breakthrough programs. I wasn't measuring *Sim City* against a list of criteria: How are the graphics? Is the content appropriate to the audience? Is the technique new? Instead, I was absorbed, consumed, impassioned. Time folded while I played, and three hours disappeared in what seemed like 10 minutes. True, most of those programs were games; but a great educational package should have the same effect. The bottom line is that what made *Sim City* and *The Way Things Work* so good was that they were irresistibly engaging. And what more can any kind of software hope to be than that?

But unfortunately, not all the educational titles I went through that month were towering redwoods. I saw some pretty anemic, bug-ridden titles too, and many starred well-known characters from kids' programs and toys. For example, *Follow the Reader* from Disney Software — one of the older programs I looked at, but one that you'll still

There are times when it helps to step back and take in the big picture, to look for those patterns you just can't see from up close. And that's just what Heidi decided to do in this month's column.



In *Math Workshop*, Broderbund's irresistible main character, Poly Gonzales, displays an infectious enthusiasm for numbers.

doesn't write the code, and his starring role doesn't save the program. All too often, such well-known characters are just facades for poor program design.

A third thing I learned was that there are some general hallmarks of a good program. Some aren't necessarily related to the educational design of a package, but they *do* seem to correlate with its overall quality.

To start with, while beauty is only skin deep, good graphics can often indicate conscientious programmers. Each of the best packages I saw had the sharpest pictures, the smoothest animation, and the most beautiful colors. From the simple, coloring-book style in Big Top Productions' *Hello Kitty's Big Fun Piano* and *Keroppi Day Hopper* to the detailed and subtly colored illustrations in *The Way Things Work*, the graphics in these programs set them apart from the glitzy but poorly rendered also-rans.



In *Keroppi Day Hopper*, the graphics are simple, but colorful and sharp, giving the program a sleek and finished look.

dictably? Or do the programmers' poke their virtual heads in once in a while and move things around like cyber-gods? Programs that make sense feel more complete, and their stories run more smoothly. For example, in IVI Publishing's *What is a Belly Button?*, when a child clicks on a tube of toothpaste the contents ooze out of the top. The programmers wanted to put the toothpaste back in the tube so that kids could click on it again, so they animated the toothpaste tube slurping the goo back inside rather than simply redrawing the tube in its original state. Even though it wouldn't work in your bathroom at home, the process makes logical sense.

Finally, a good educational title has a sense of depth to it. Most programs at least try to surround information with an interesting presentation or environment — perhaps an alien invasion, or a friendly neighborhood. But when you get to the information, it hits you like a tuxedo T-shirt at a debutante ball (now *there's* a cliche in the making). There's no question that you've bumped into the thing you're supposed to learn, and that's usually where the spell is broken.

In Optical Data Interactive's *The Wanderoos Go Exploring*, for example, kids travel through a maze-like interface which always leads back to the same gimmick: A VCR that plays information the children are supposed to learn. Kids can't manipulate the information, so most of the exploration and discovery is centered around the interface itself.

But when a program has a well-crafted plot or vivid characters with *integrated* lessons, it has a lot more depth — and therefore is more effective. The educational content can hide in the layers of the game, so kids won't notice the seam between the fun and the facts. In Broderbund's *Math Workshop*, for example, the presentation and the friendly main character make the math drills fun. The rewards for correct answers are worthwhile, and the process of figuring out puzzles is as satisfying as the ultimate solution. Almost like magic, math becomes a game.

And magic is what you should be looking for in any software, but especially in a package that claims to teach your children. Good educational titles can be as good-looking, as enthralling and carefully designed, as the best PC games. So when you're in the "forest" of titles at your local software store, don't fix on the first famous name or flashy box you see. Step back and compare, take the whole forest in — and look for the magic.

PCG

find on shelves — teaches children how language describes action. Kids direct Mickey Mouse through his day by choosing words to complete sentences. Then Mickey acts out the choices. For example, the program shows the sentence "Mickey walked to the kitchen." Kids can change the word *walked* to *ran* or *skipped*, and Mickey will alter his gait accordingly. They can also change the word *kitchen* to *bathroom* or *living room*, and Mickey will change his destination.

This is the germ of a great reading program, but it's poorly executed. Besides choppy animations, the program offers a very limited amount of interactivity. The only thing a child can do is choose words, with no other opportunity to manipulate or explore the game world. And as a result, the program isn't much fun to work with. Kids could get more from sitting with their parents, dictating and illustrating a story on paper.

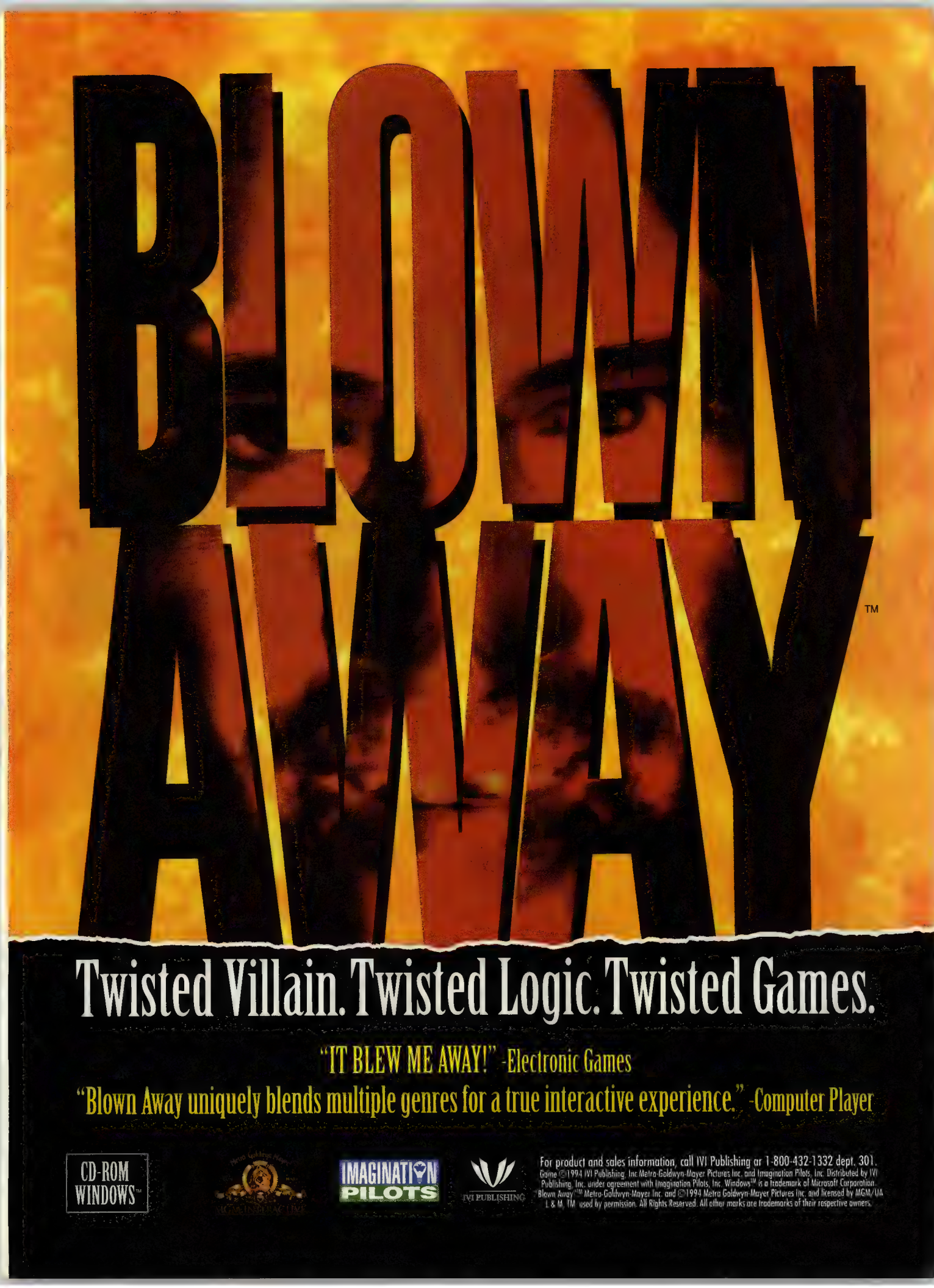
If Mickey Mouse can't draw a crowd to the computer, no one can. (Well, maybe the Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers can, but let's not split hairs.) Popular as he is, however, Mickey Mouse

When a program has a well-crafted plot or vivid characters with *integrated* lessons, it has a lot more depth — and therefore is more effective.

Another superficial characteristic that seems to indicate overall quality is the logic of a program's environment. Does the plot make sense? Do objects and characters move around pre-



In *What is a Belly Button*, the programmers wanted to put the toothpaste back in the tube, so they found a logical way to solve the problem.



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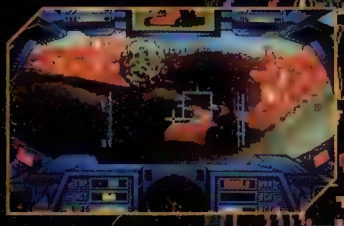
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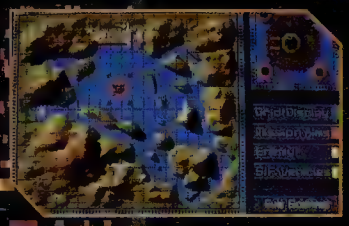
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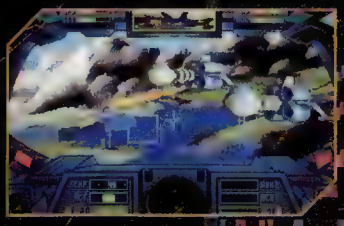
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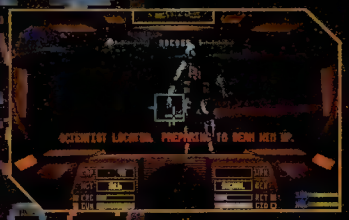


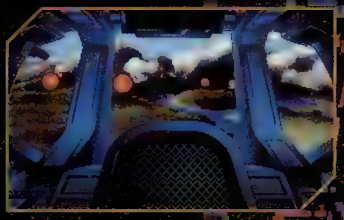


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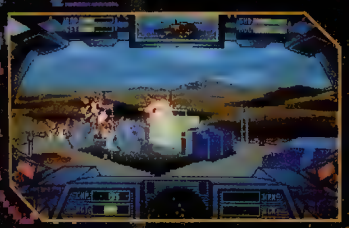
You lower yourself into your cockpit knowing that the annihilation of Krellan life is little reward for the millions of your race who have been "harvested". You have hatred in your heart and become driven by one compulsion

retribution /ˌretri'bju:ʃ(ə)n/ *n.* requital usu. for evil done; vengeance.





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THEY'VE HAD THEIR POUND OF FLESH

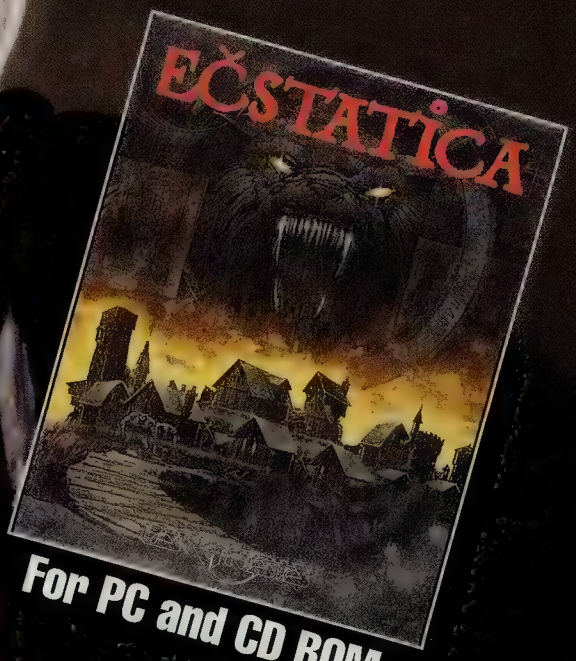
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This game was developed by Andrew Spencer. Animation by Alain Maindron.

Product Information Number 131

Oh Great — Another Real-Life Courtroom Drama

If you hate Nintendo as much as I do (not just the company and its lame little game system, but the whole blank-eyed, joypad-twitching, pre-teen zombie subculture it spawned), you're probably blissfully unaware that there are actually a handful of titles for the cursed system that are more than just a waste of time, silicon, and $50.

One of these not-too-awful games is *Mario's Super Plumber Mobile* (it's really called *Mario Kart* - Eds.), an amusing little car-race game that uses an interesting 3D perspective which rotates the landscape around your little Plumber-Mobile as you zoom through the race courses. It's a nice change of pace from all of the tedious platform games that used to dominate Nintendo Land, and if a federal judge forced me to own a Nintendo product I'd certainly consider this one.

About a month ago, while I was lurking around America Online, I noticed a Shareware demo of something called *Skunny Kart* from Copysoft. It featured Copysoft's Skunny Squirrel character, the star of 5 other Copysoft games, in a very *Mario Kart*-like racing game for the PC. I downloaded it immediately and planned to feature it here for all of you Wolflings.

Then I noticed a print ad for Apogee's newest game, *Wacky Wheels*, which looked remarkably similar to *Skunny Kart*. The shareware demo wasn't available yet, so I called Apogee and learned that the similarities between *Skunny Kart* and *Wacky Wheels* were more than just skin-deep, and that all was not well in Shareware Land.

According to Apogee president Scott Miller, Apogee approached Phillipe Mercier — chairman of the Belgian Copysoft — in early 1994 about a game Copysoft was developing, then titled *Wacky Karts*. Apogee began negotiating with Copysoft to obtain the rights to publish the game using Apogee's established shareware model.

Several weeks later, with negotiations still in progress, Apogee was contacted by one of the authors of *Wacky Karts*, who stated that he and his programming partner wished to leave Copysoft and work directly with Apogee. They apparently didn't get along well with Mercier, and resented the fact that their contract did not pay them royalties for their work.

The two authors, Shaun Gadalla and Andy Edwardson, paid back the money they borrowed from Copysoft (25,000 pounds, which is some kind of English money) to buy their way out of the contract, then entered into an agreement with Apogee to release their game.

Near the end of September, Apogee learned that Copysoft had allegedly violated their agreement with the two authors (now under agreement with Apogee) by using their original code, with minor additions, in the newly-titled *Skunny Kart*. They hired an international attorney and intend to file suit against Copysoft.

But Copysoft's David Snell tells a much different story: "We've been developing *Skunny Kart* (formerly *Wacky Kart*) for about 16 months now, and if you search the IBM file library on either CIS or AOL you'll find that our demo was uploaded in December of 1993."

During the development process, Phillipe Mercier began contractual discussions with Apogee to have them publish the game. In the final days of the discussions, Gadalla and Edwardson decided to cease development on the game unless they were granted 30% royalties on it. This was not in their contract and Copysoft declined, so the programmers took their work over to Apogee, where they presumably got a better deal — despite the fact that their contract states that all games, tools, and associated source code produced and written while under contract to Copysoft will remain the sole property of Copysoft.

"We are awaiting a court date in the UK to get our equipment back from the developers, and to sue for damages," Snell says. "In an attempt to avoid a court hearing, Gadalla and Edwardson sent Copysoft a check for 25,000 pounds, which we placed in escrow as partial payment of damages. We informed them that the case would still go to court. But these programmers told Apogee that the payment bought off their contract and the game's rights from Copysoft.

"We continued to develop the game without them, and we've now had a finished product in the marketplace for about 6 weeks. Apogee has attempted to thwart our release at every turn by claiming that it's illegal, but they have yet to produce *any* verifiable document showing this to be true. Unfortunately, their industry position was powerful enough to have *Skunny Kart* pulled from AOL and CIS by simply saying our code belonged to them."

Wait! According to Snell, there's more: "To avoid years of litigation, we've offered Apogee a non-exclusive license to market *Wacky Wheels* for a pre-determined percentage of the sales generated (we would retain ownership of the intellectual copyright), and they countered with an offer to us of 10% of the gross sales of *Wacky Wheels* if we *did not* release *Skunny Kart* to the public. Obviously, we declined."

At this point, neither Apogee nor Copysoft have come to terms with this situation, although Snell says that he's received a letter from Miller (Did not! Did too!) stating that Apogee no longer has a problem with *Skunny Kart* being distributed.

But while the story plays itself out in the international courts, you can make your *own* decision by checking out *both* games on this month's CD-ROM!

And you thought the world of Shareware was all lollipops and sunshine. No way, O.J....

P.S. — Got some more E-Mail addresses for ya...
CompuServe — 74774,2060
Delphi — WolfOnline
GEnie — WolfOnline

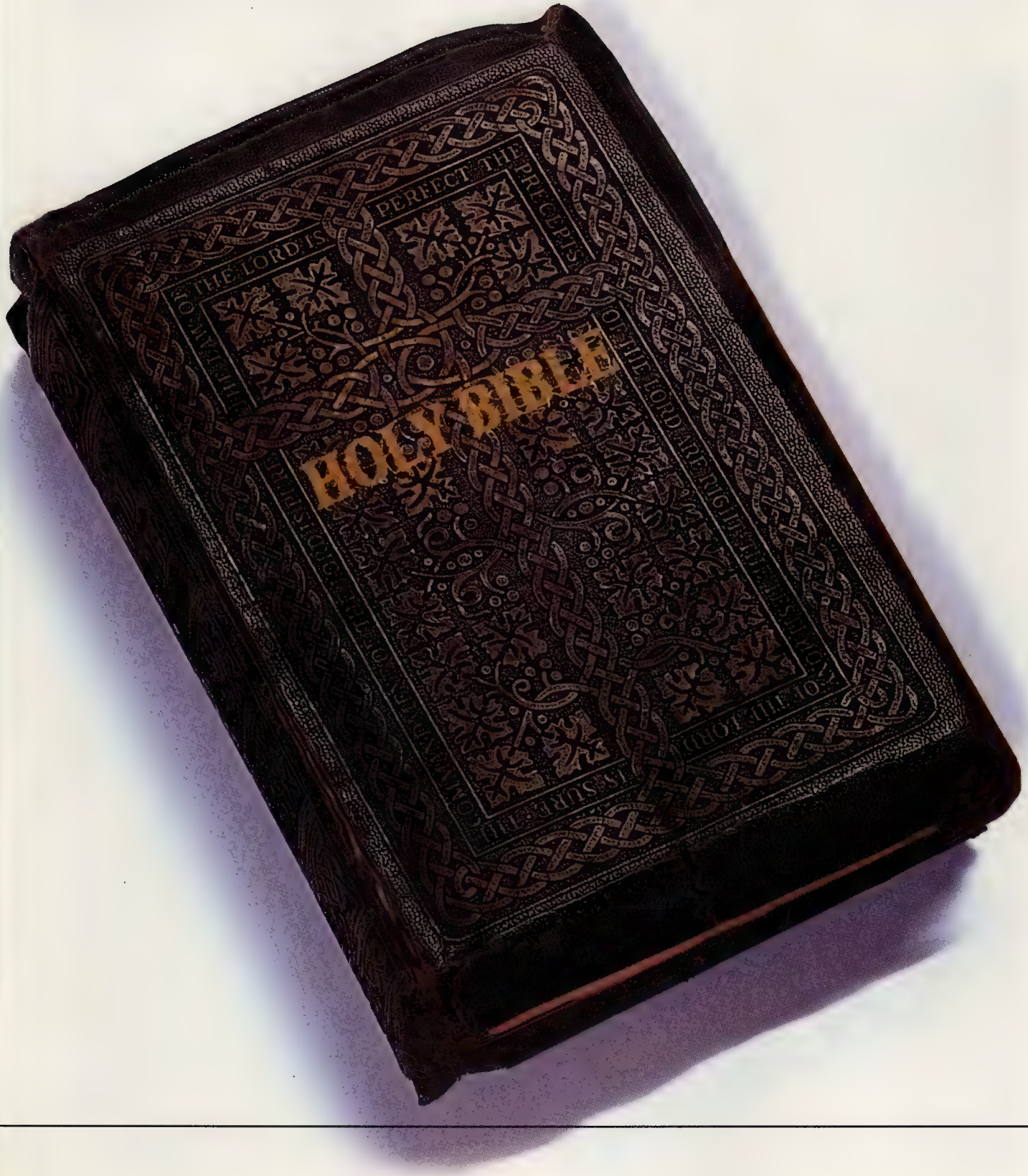
PCG

Scott Wolf



Could it be that the world of shareware isn't as easy-going as it seems? There are big profits at stake, after all, so a bit of legal battling was probably inevitable. Here's Scott with the facts.

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STRATEGY CENTRAL

SOLUTIONS • TECHNIQUES • QUICK TIPS

This month, we've got some strategy for three of our favorites — Origin's *System Shock*, Virgin's *Beneath a Steel Sky*, and GameTek's *Quarantine*. They're all great games, and can be pretty tough if you're not careful. But that's where we come in.

We didn't get too many hints and strategy letters from you guys this month. Maybe we're already covering all the titles you want us to, or maybe you've just been too busy playing the recent crop of great new titles to write to us. Whatever the case, we want to hear from you! If we don't, we'll just write about our favorites, and then you'll *never* know how to solve the Riddle of the Spiny Lobster, or whatever else has got you stumped.

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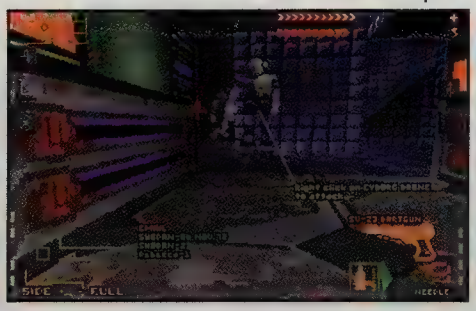
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The SHODAN Showdown

You have a single goal in *System Shock* — destroy the evil computer SHODAN before he destroys you. In the course of your quest you will come across a heap of weapons, some better than others, and face numerous obstacles. Two things primarily bar your way: security systems and bad guys. T. Liam MacDonald emerged weary and red-eyed from his office (he calls it the Citadel now) just in time to give us some great *System Shock* tips.

First Things First

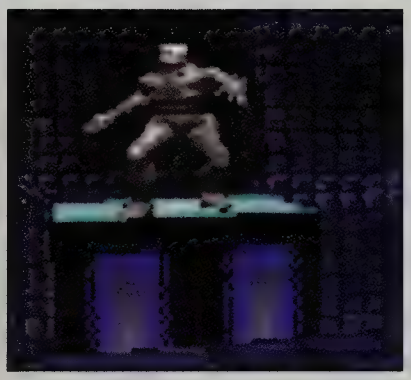
Explore the entire med lab, especially the trap doors and closets. You'll find the log entries, including one from yourself listing all the information that you knew about the Citadel (including doorway access codes). Gather up all this stuff and keep it. There's also a metal bar lying on the floor. Since this will be your only weapon until you find the dart gun and the mag pistol, pick it up and keep it in hand at all times.



Grab the metal bar as soon as possible. It will be your only weapon for quite a while.

If It Moves, Kill It First

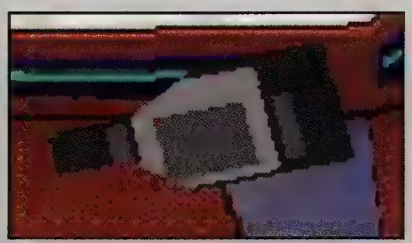
In the beginning, you'll face the mutants in quantity. These were once poor saps who just thought they could get a good-paying job on a space station, and wound up the subject of bizarre experiments gone awry. They tend to gurgle a bit, which makes it easier to locate them aurally, but visually they can be hard to find — they tend to stay in the shadows and don't leap out until the last moment. At first, all you have is the metal bar, but that's okay — a few whacks and their heads will cave in but good.



Be sure to explore every nook and cranny of the med lab, and keep an eye out for traps.

Curiosity Pays

Pick up and read *all* e-mail and log entries. They contain crucial information, including security codes. And you'll want to search everyone you kill, even the mutants. Ammo, health patches, and a lot of other useful objects can be found in abundance on corpses.



Destroy all the cameras you can find while exploring to reduce the security level.

Darts, Anyone?

When you find the dart gun (just outside of the surgery suite), start using that on the mutants and even the cyborgs. There are darts to be found all over, and they come in two varieties: Needle darts just drug the buggers, while the other have tips that explode on impact. Two explosive darts should take out a mutant, and three will work on cyborgs.

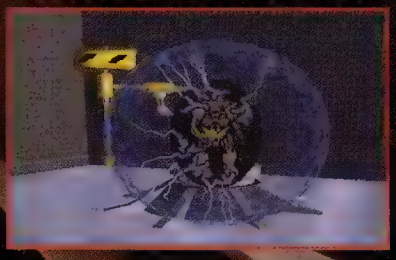
Here's the Plan

When you get to the far side of level one (where the hopping security robot will kill you a few times) look for a blue plate set in the floor. Step on this plate to travel to a lower-level viewing station. Look for a switch along the bottom of the wall and throw it. This activates the plate at the center of the room. Step on it, and it will lift you up to a kind of viewing alcove where you can take a peek at a bank of computers, but the important thing here is the puzzle. Solve it by clicking the Xs and dashes to complete the circuit, and it will unlock the force door in this area. If you're playing

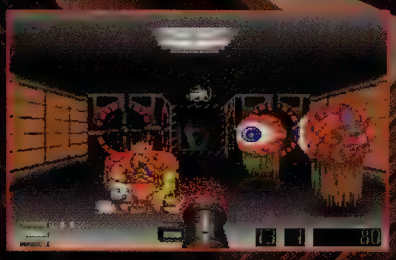
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–Computer Game Review



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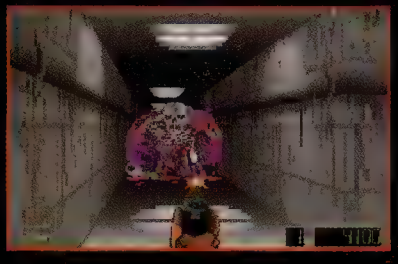


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Product Information Number 91

with puzzles on, it's the only way to continue.

Past the force door you find a sort of storage area and clinic for cyborgs. In one of these rooms you'll find a tiny recess with a human outline on the wall. This converts people into cyborgs when they die. Throw the switch, and it turns off the cyborg conversion and reconfigures the station for healing purposes. Now, if you die, you'll be brought back to life here, instead of turned into a cyborg.

Kill all the cyborgs in "storage" before they activate, then build up health levels and take out the big guy on the platform (it ain't easy). Make your way to the banks of computers and toss a grenade into the room. Once these computers are destroyed, SHODAN will be *very* pissed, and cyborgs will start coming out of the walls. Try using grenades on them, but in all likelihood they'll kill you and you'll come back to life in the cyborg conversion chamber. Simply make your way to the exit (just past this chamber).



Use the dart gun with the explosive darts on both the mutants and the cyborg drones.



SHODAN will be righteously pissed after you take out level 1. He'll be watching....



Switch the cyborg convertor to "heal" and you'll come back to life whenever you die.



After you take out the computer banks, cyborg drones will start coming out of the walls.

Any Schriebmann Port in a Storm

Beating the Mid-Level Crisis of *Beneath a Steel Sky*

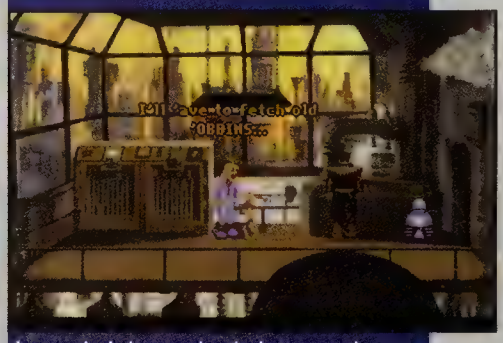
Beneath a Steel Sky is one of the most enjoyable graphic adventures we've seen in a while — but it's also one of the toughest.

A key part of the game takes place inside the cyberspace of LINC, the computer that controls the entire city. And to interface with LINC you need a Schriebmann Port, a tidy little hole in your skull. So, for your gaming pleasure, here's a step-by-step guide to what you'll need to do to get a Schriebmann Port.

We'll assume you made it through the game's first puzzle — getting off the scaffolding and finding a way down to the smelter and out to the breezeway connecting the Steam Control Room and the Pipe Factory. Along the way you should have picked up a wrench, a pair of sunglasses, an ID card — and a sandwich if you're especially devious.

Steam Control Room

Talk to the old guy for a few laughs, then use the wrench to loosen the nuts on the two buttons at the right of the screen. Tell Joey to press the button on the right, and when he does you press the other button. The old guy will leave the room to fetch Hobbins. Go ahead and take the light bulb in the machine on the left.



Loosen the bolts securing the buttons on the Surge Test Control, then tell Joey to press one of the buttons while you press the other.

The Walkway

This is where you'll probably be chatting up Gilbert Lamb (the guy in the beaver fur coat), as well as use the "welding" Joey to cut the red cable at the right. And once Anita uses her "jammer" on your ID card, you access the LINC terminal here to change Gilbert Lamb to D-LINC status and take all away all his credits (more on that later).

No More Questions

BYTE Magazine Pournelle Award Aug. '94

Page 83: 5th Paragraph;
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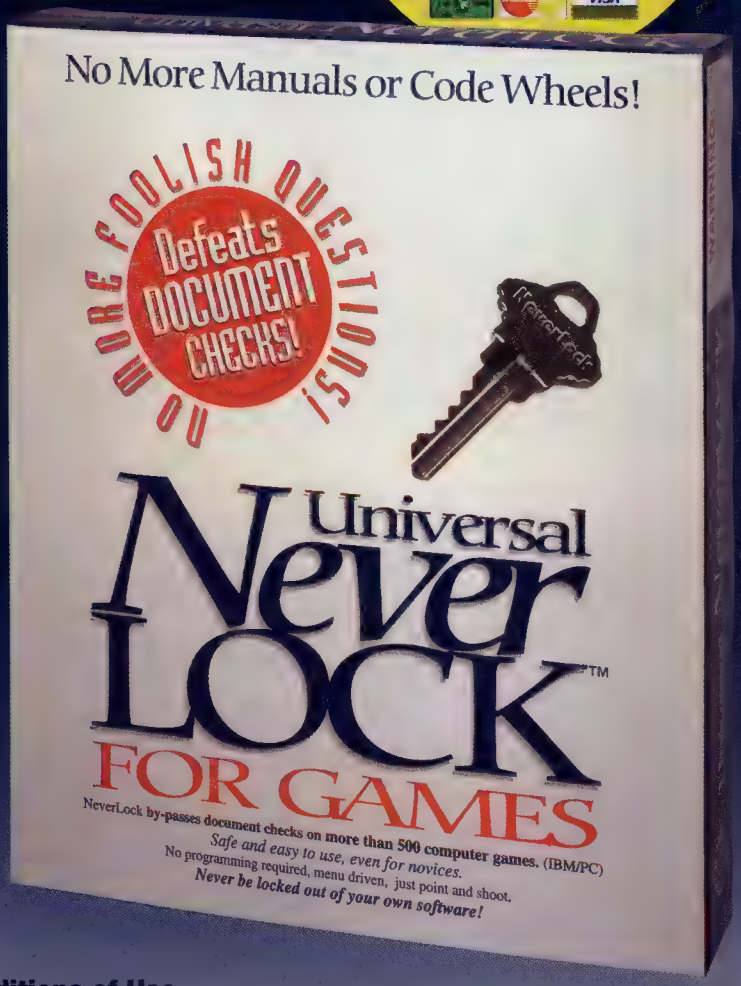
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The Pipe Factory (Anita and Potts)
Talk to Anita until Gilbert Lamb appears. Tell him you're a security agent, and he'll leave. Walk to the right and throw the wrench in the gears, then retrieve it. Go back to the left and use the wrench on the welding robot to replace Joey's shell. Go the right, look in the window, then send Joey into the storeroom; when he comes out, tell him to return and disable the alarm. Then you go in, raise the gangway, and take the putty — it's really plastic explosive. Take it to the Steam Control Room, flip the power off on the machine on the left, put the plastic explosive in the light socket, then turn on the power. When the doors blow open, put both of the exposed switches in the off (down) position.

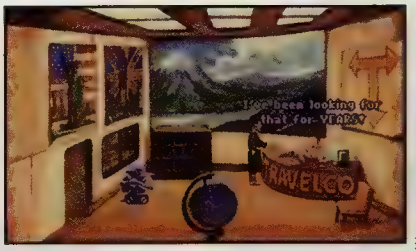
Now you can take the elevator down to the Middle Level. Go left when you come out of the elevator, then through the doorway near the top right of the screen. Reich's apartment is on the left.

Reich's Apartment
The only thing you need here is the motorcycle magazine hidden under Reich's pillow.

Travelco
Now this one's *tricky*. When the travel agent says he prefers to keep his wheels to the ground, *you're* supposed to interpret that as meaning he's a motorcycle fanatic. Anyway, give him the mag from Reich's apartment, and he'll give you the ticket.

Mid-Level Breezeway
Lamb is continually walking around here. Talk to him until he says he needs a break from work, then give him the Travelco tickets. He'll reward your generosity with a tour of the Pipe Factory.

Pipe Factory (Radiation Area)
After Lamb leaves you with Potts, walk right one screen and start talking to Anita. Get as much info as you can, then when she talks about hacking into LINC give her your card. She'll use her jammer on it, giving you almost unlimited LINC access. Go back out to the gangway and do a number on Lamb's LINC status, then head down to the middle level.



The Travel Agent's going to make you wait a month for a ticket, unless you've got something he wants so badly that he'll forego the red tape.



Do whatever it takes to get that Schriebmann Port, no matter how painful it sounds.

Burke's Bio-Surgery
Go to the left until you get to Burke's Bio-Surgery. The "receptionist" won't let you see the Doctor, so let Joey give it a try. Go in and ask the doc for a Schriebmann Port. Do whatever it takes to get the operation (you'll have to make a painful promise). Once the operation is over, talk to the doc again — he'll tell you about a special insurance policy. Time to visit Anchor Insurance!

Anchor Insurance
Tell Billy Anchor you were referred by Doctor Burke. When he goes to check into the policy, tell Joey to use his welding tool on the statue. Take the anchor and use it on the cable you cut earlier to make a grappling hook.

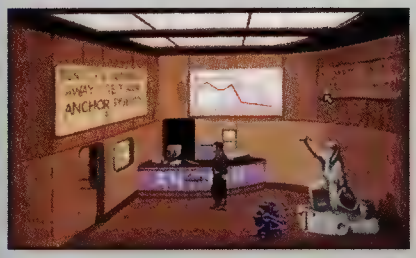
Back Upstairs
Take the elevator back to the top level. Walk two screens left, then enter door at the top right — you'll find yourself in the room you were in at the start of the game. Climb the stairs, go through the door on the right, then use the grappling hook on the Security symbol on the building across the street. You're in Security, and you're on your own... at least for this month!



After Burke abandons you during the Factory tour, go to this screen and talk to Anita. She'll use her "jammer" software to upgrade the ID card you took from Reich's body — and tell you about the Schriebmann Port.



Only Joey's gonna talk you past Doctor Burke's receptionist. Tell him to use his "natural charm" with her.



After Burke tells you about his friend Willy, head to Anchor Insurance and ask about the Special Policy. When the agent leaves the room, let Joey indulge his love of welding.



Product Information Number 140

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Product Information Number 132

Surviving the Mean Streets

In our review of *Quarantine* last month, we didn't really delve into the strategy and tactics necessary to escape the bloody byways of Kemo City. Yes, believe it or not, *Quarantine* really does require sound strategies, fiscal management, and tactics — because as much fun as it to waste everything you can train your guns on, that's *not* going to help you in your break for freedom. Here are some general rules you should always keep in mind as you drive, shoot, and even ram your way through Kemo City and the evil OmniCorp corporation.

Maintain a Good Work Ethic. The only way you're going to win is to buy better equipment for your car, and the only way you can pick up bucks to do that is to haul as many fares as possible. There is one caveat to that rule, though...

Don't be Mr. Nice Guy. A lot of the fares you pick up just aren't worth your time — you know, only $150 to drive a drunk across town — so don't chase the almighty dollar so much that you wind up costing yourself more in repairs than you make for the trip. Be especially leery of trips that necessitate prolonged journeys through mine-infested areas, like the streets that run along the outer walls of the first level.

Discretion is the Better Part of Destruction. It's tempting to shoot everything and everyone that moves, but *don't do it!* You'll notice that there are several types of other vehicles buzzing about — cycles, trucks, coupes, etc. — and many are organized into gangs. If you toast *enough* of a gang's cars, they'll come looking for you, usually at the worst possible moment. Even something as unimposing as hovercycle can inflict major-league damage with mines, or get in your way during a crucial mission. And the bigger the enemy, the more you want to avoid pissing them off.

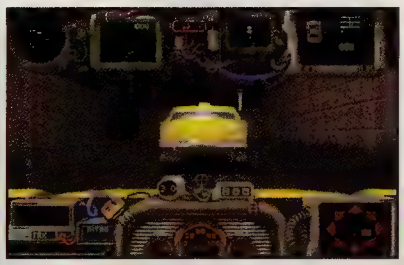
One case in which you *never* want to shoot is if you're tailgating another cab down a street full of mines; stay behind him, and he'll carve a safe path for you.

Speed Kills. Well, it doesn't really kill, but it can cause you to miss turns or run into deadly obstacles, costing you valuable time.

Use Your Uzi Wisely. On missions where you have to take out large numbers of pedestrians, such as the software pirates at the Ring of Trees or the head-hunting cannibals at the Zoo (both are in The Park), try pulling up alongside them and using the Uzi (you get it free when you upgrade your machine guns). You'll get a faster kill rate that way than if you try to point your cab at targets and use forward-firing weapons. Be careful, though: Your field of vision is limited this way, and you can get disoriented if enemy vehicles ram you.

If Your Passenger Has a Specific Job For You, SAVE YOUR GAME! Most of the time, the weirdos you pick up chatter on about such run-of-the-mill topics as devil worship, drug abuse, bodily functions, or other such amusing psycho-babble. But if your passenger asks you to perform a specific task such as pizza delivery, assassination of software pirates, or delivering a coffin, accept and then save your game! Completing these assignments on time is the only way you'll be given passwords to get out of a level.

Fully Utilize the Weapons Store and Repair Shop. If you're off the grid (i.e., the road — your hovercab literally draws power from the streets) and your batteries run down, your cab will start taking damage. One way to avoid this is to duck into a Weapons store or Repair shop. When you come back out your batteries will be back at full power, giving you enough power to safely return to the road.



Don't shoot that defenseless cab — let him take dangerous mines out of your way instead!

PASSWORDS

Here are passwords to take you to levels 2, 3, and 4 of *Quarantine*. A word of warning: If you simply cruise to an exit bay and go to the next level, you won't have enough firepower to survive. We're providing them just in case you get stuck and would like to take a peek at the mayhem that lies ahead.

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LETTERS

You guys sure do like to let us know what's on your mind — and we love it! Every day brings in a new batch of letters with praise, complaints, suggestions, and even personal anecdotes of PC gaming experiences, and this month we've tried to pick letters that touch on as wide a range of topics as possible. Remember, even though we can't answer each letter, we do open up (or download, in the case of E-mail) and read all of them. So keep on writing, and don't forget: Your letter could win you a free game!

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Upgrade Time, or PC Envy?

PC Gamer:

This letter is being written for two reasons, and is from a very satisfied and sincerely impressed fan of your magazine.

Firstly, and obviously, I very much appreciate and enjoy your publication. The reviews are thorough and top-notch, and the articles are informative and on up-to-date topics. And, speaking of up-to-date, the titles that you review have the amazing tendency (unlike other mags) to be NEW! Gee, whoodathunkit?

I also very much like the fact that you've done my company (The Software Toolworks/Mindscape) quite a good turn by putting *D/Generation* on your Top 40. This was a *huge* surprise, as we in development were absolutely convinced that we were the only ones who knew about the product — you know how us programmers feel about those marketing and sales guys. You have my utmost thanks as a consumer, and producer of entertainment software.

Secondly, I wanted to comment on the whole upgrade issue, and how a lot of people get frustrated or even angry at the fact that they keep being "told" to go out and by the latest hardware, as if their current machine has gone the way of the Betamax (I still have mine, by the way). What most people don't realize is that, at the current rate the typical high-end machine technology has been increasing, if a user buys the top-end machine, he/she will most likely not have to upgrade *any* portion of it for two years. It takes a long time for a market such as ours to *require* its users to have the latest technology, assuming we want our products to sell in large numbers (and, of course, we do). So there would be no point in requiring a Pentium 90 at this point — although if you're buying a new machine now, that's probably what you should go for.

As a software developer, I have to have the latest machines (or some reasonable equivalent) if I want to be able to keep up. Yet after five years of working at The Software Toolworks, I'm still on my third machine, which I got about two years ago: a 486/66. Sure, when your usage patterns change — like going from mostly DOS apps to Windows, or running more graphics- or sound-intensive applications (which are usually games), you might *want* a larger monitor or a better sound card, but is it *necessary*? That's the main question you have to ask yourself, and people too often assume that the answer is "I want to run the newest and coolest, so I have to have the newest and coolest to do it." This is *not* the case.

We're starting to get Pentium 90's in the office now, but that's only for the product managers and other people who are "in charge." I still need a high-end machine, though, and I'm quite happy with the speed of my current machine. Sure, I want a Pentium — but I know (having followed the industry) that it certainly isn't necessary.

So in a nutshell, what an upgrader is buying his new machine for is not so much the present, but the future. "But," I hear the users cry, "in the future the current machines are going to be much less expensive." I retort that in the same future, there will be machines that are much more powerful than the top-of-the-line machines of today, and they'll be approximately the same price as the current top-of-the-line. Just keep in mind that if a user buys the best machine available, he/she should be satisfied for at least two years with the purchase. If not, you're probably suffering from a severe case of envy, and you might not be seeing how useful your current machine still is.

John Merlino
via aol

There you have it, folks — right from the horse's mouth! And John, you bring up some very important points. You're right when you say that just about all the games out there will run on a 486/66, and that if you buy the best machine around when you do get a new one, you'll avoid the need to upgrade for a lot longer than if you don't go for the best. But as you said, that 486/66 was top-of-the-line two years ago; it won't be much longer before it becomes the minimum game platform for playing the latest releases.



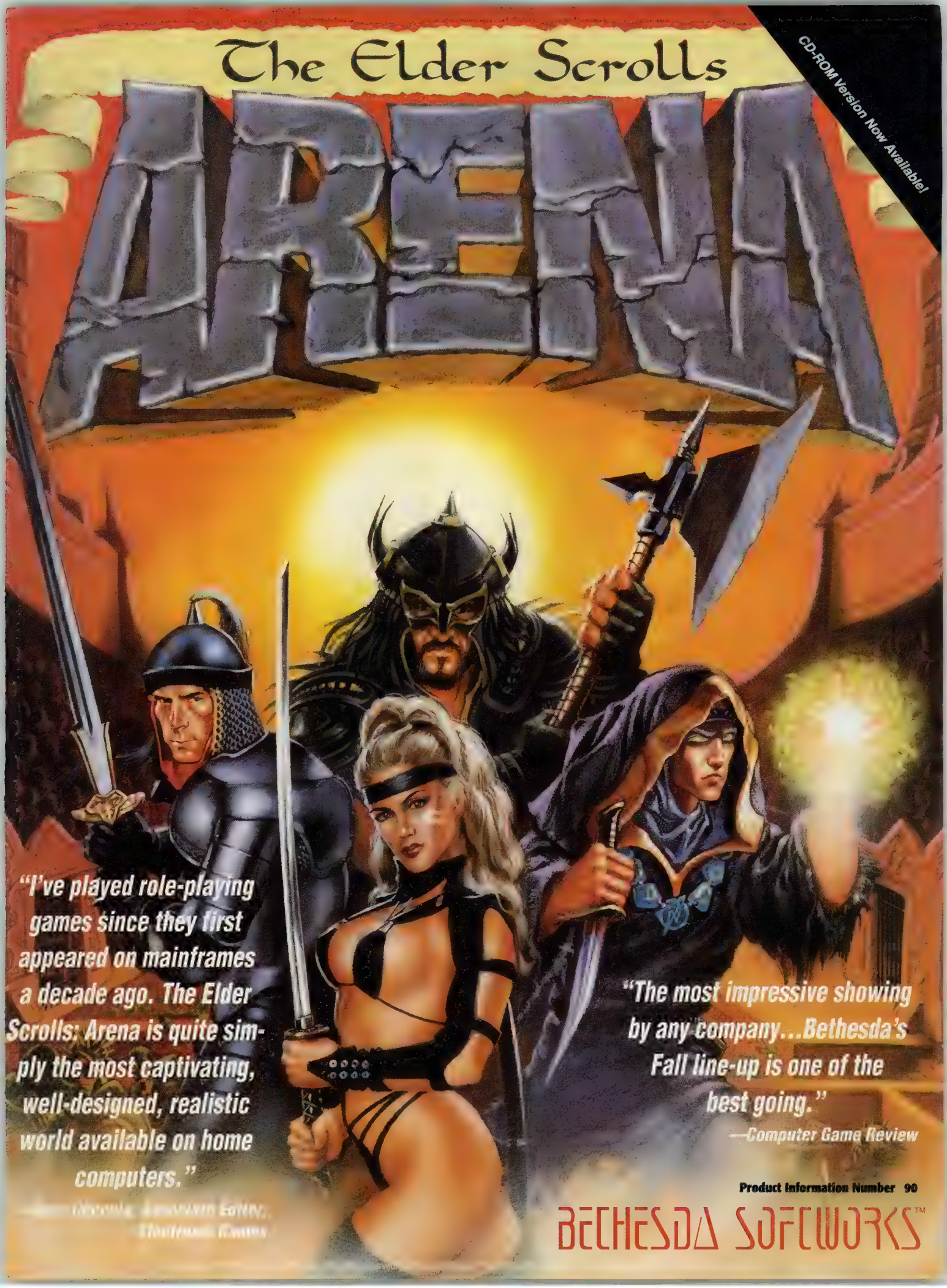
Does Doom make you woozy? You're not alone!

I Think I'm Gonna be Sick!

Dear PC Gamer,

Much ado has been made over the first-person style views of *Wolfenstein 3D* and *Doom*, and not without reason. However, I've discovered one big drawback which I have not yet heard voiced. Unless I travel slowly — which is near impossible when you're anxious to see what's around the next corner — I end up with an unpleasant case of motion sickness!

It took awhile for me to relate my sudden rash of nauseous spells to the


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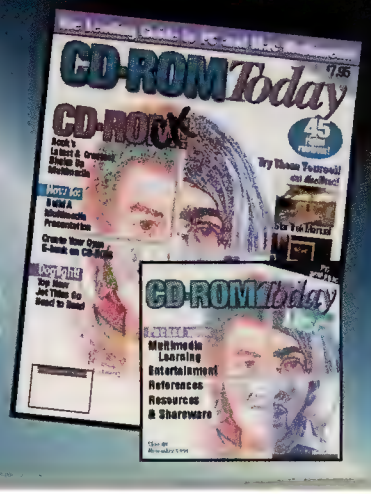
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computer games, but 10-15 minutes of these games sends my stomach lurching. Yet one of my sons (who is prone to motion sickness) does not experience these effects.

PC Gamer readers who encounter sudden bouts of nausea that seem to coincide with their computer playing may well want to check out the new game's scrolling procedure to see if the rapidly shifting viewpoint is inducing motion sickness.

Sincerely
Joyce T. Piper
Norfolk, VA

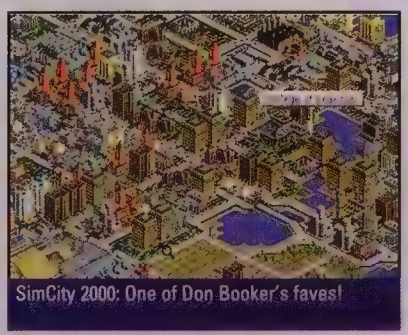
You're not the only reader who's reported such bouts of nausea, Joyce. In fact, our own Steve Poole (who always insists he'll get sick if he doesn't ride in the front seat when we go to lunch) got a bit queasy the very first time he loaded Wolfenstein 3D. And Todd Vaughn reported a bit of the old sour stomach while playing through a particularly nasty segment of Dark Forces. In neither case did it keep them from playing more, though, and they eventually got used to it.

Where we really expect to see the sickness thing become an issue is in virtual reality settings. Imagine moving through those corridors in Doom, the scene bobbing up and down to simulate walking — but all you can see is the view ahead, and you're sitting down at the time! In the end, first-person PC games will probably be a lot like roller coasters — unbeatable fun for those who can take all the action, but best avoided by those who can't.

The Games They Aren't A'Changing

Dear PC Gamer,

I'm a long-time subscriber, and I love what you're doing. I look forward to reading *PC Gamer* as much as I do buying and playing the games you review. Your ratings system is the best; I can scan the Final Verdict boxes, and then spend time reading only about those games that really interest me.



SimCity 2000: One of Don Booker's faves!

You also have a good mixture of reviews and advertisements, and I enjoy both. After I decide that I really like a game, I want to know what the street price is, and if it's available yet. I'm glad to see several mail-order ads which answer both questions.

My only gripe isn't even with your magazine, but rather with my perception that game developers need to be more creative or imaginative. Almost every game is either a simulator where you fly something, an action adventure where you shoot something, or a role-player where you find something. Enough with the castles and space creatures! *The Incredible Machine* was a good example of something a little different, and *Sim City* was also a very creative idea — but that too has almost been overdone. I don't have any good suggestions, but then again I'm not making the big bucks developing software.

Yours truly,
Donald L. Booker
Houston, TX

We certainly agree with you that there's room for some new approaches to PC gaming. When a fresh concept like Populous or Tetris comes along, everyone benefits — and naturally, other designers begin looking at the successful new idea in hopes of capitalizing on it. Pretty soon, though, the market can get lousy with poor imitations, and all of a sudden that fresh idea is old and overused.

There's another thing to keep in mind: genres like flight sims and RPGs are crowded because they're popular. An awful lot of people love specific categories of games, and will buy damn near every new title of that kind that comes out. So from the developers' point of view, designing a new title that falls within an established genre makes good financial sense. It's a lot riskier to try something new and unproven — although if it works, the payoff can be enormous.

Faster, Faster!

Dear PC Gamer,

I'm very disappointed in they way game companies don't really release games for those fast computers out there. I have a 486DX2/66Mhz with a 340 and a 170MB hard drive (both compressed with Stacker 4.0), a 14.4 modem, and 12MB of RAM. I think more people should wake up and smell the coffee, and upgrade their systems so that game companies will make use of those faster computers. Example: America On-Line uses only 9600 baud access, but I have a 14.4k Modem.

I like the idea of putting demos on a CD-ROM disc, but you shouldn't still have to make a version with a 3.5" disk. People who don't have a CD-ROM should get with the program, because pretty soon it's going to be a standard.

Sincerely,
Nick Suranyi
via aol

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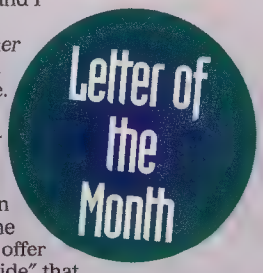
We think if you look around, you'll see that more companies are taking advantage of systems like yours. In fact, we're starting to see games that need at least a Pentium to run the way they were meant to run. Take a look at Navy Fighters *or* Wing Commander III, *for example.*

Most PCs sold today are already 486/66 or faster, and most ship with CD-ROM drives. And with millions of new PCs sold each year, it won't be long before that becomes the new base system game designers will be aiming for — you may get your wish sooner than you think.

As for the 3.5" demos, we feel that its important to give our readers the choice to go with whichever version of the mag they want. Not everyone has a CD-ROM yet (although we hope they'll get 'em soon), and we don't want to shut anyone out.

You Can't Get Even

Dear PEECEEGEE,



I have a complaint for computer game companies, and I thought other *PC Gamer* readers might agree with me. Why have so many publishers started printing lousy documentation to ship with the game, only to offer a "strategy guide" that contains most of what the documentation should have covered? I'm getting tired of shelling out $50-60 for a new game and finding out that it's nearly impossible to play using the instruction manual I'm given. Most "strategy guides" that I've seen have been $15-30, bringing the total price for a playable game to $65-90. This is nuts! Some publishers even reached the point where they release the strategy guide *before* the game!

I think you can see why I'm annoyed. *Please,* just write good instructions the first time around. If I still need the strategy guide after that, fine — but at least give me a fighting chance to play the game with the documentation it came with!

Thanks,
Matt Howell
via email

There's no doubt about it: Some publishers are really cleaning up on strategy guides. And there are a number of times when, just as you say, better documentation — or better game design — might make extra help unnecessary. Of course there are plenty of strategy guides that do provide good, much-needed hints and solutions to games that are complete, but very tough. Those guides provide a welcome service; unfortunately, many don't. We'd be interested in hearing from other readers on this subject!

Welcome to the Jungle

Hello!

Well, I finally got around to writing you a letter of appreciation. I have never written fan mail, so consider this a great compliment.

It has only been in the last six months since I left the 16-bit world of Nintendo and Genesis. Since your magazine has been on sale, I'm no longer lost in this new (and not-so-well charted world) of computer gaming. It's not just the fact that you let the curious test-drive new products, but also the way you appear to go out on a limb to give fair — and often unpopular, I'm sure — opinions of the games you review (though sometimes I wonder what your magazine's criteria is to accept the game it demos on the disk).

By the way, thank you for reducing the cost of your mag. Not that I would have missed one issue at the old price, but it definitely makes you feel like you've got your money's worth. I've also read in your mag that soon a CD version of the demo will be on the way. If this is the case, I can't wait to see what happens when I shut the door of my drive with your demo in it. If it is anything like the satisfaction I get from your magazine, my next letter will be asking if you're selling stock.

CD you soon!
Lawrence Hinkle
via aol

That was a nice affirmation! And as for how we pick demos, here's the deal: On the floppy, we're limited because, obviously, we only have 1.44MB to work with. So we try to choose either a demo we feel will be an important title that our readers will want the chance to evaluate for themselves, or one that we think is just a lot of fun. On the CD-ROM, we can include a lot more stuff. Our goal there is to bring you absolutely everything we can get our hands on, because we know that the best way for you to decide whether you want to buy a game is to try it out and see what it's like — and to read the PC Gamer review. The way we see it, the more you have to choose from the better.

Sound Advice

Dear PC Gamer,

About a year ago, when I was installing a game called *Chessmaster 3000,* I was asked what sound card I had. At that time, I didn't know what a sound card was, so I just chose PC speak-

er. When I learned what a sound card was, though, I decided to buy one. So I ran the install program again to look at the list of sound cards. I decided on an AdLib, so I called a bunch of places to see if they had them. None of them did. They only had the Sound Blasters. Then, I read in your magazine that AdLibs weren't very good or something. I'd like to know: what are the differences in price and sound quality between AdLib and Sound Blaster?

Sincerely,
Paul Gazzoli

P.S. Could you get a demo of *Deep Space Nine: The Hunt* sometime soon?

The AdLib was one of the very first sound cards, and it could only recreate game music. It didn't have the ability to reproduce digital sound (like voices and sound effects), but it caught on quickly and its simple method of synthesizing game music became a standard among game designers. Still, it was a very basic card. The Sound Blaster brought digitized sound and music together, and went on to supplant the AdLib as the gamer's card of choice. It's still the most widely recognized card — and it's a lot better today than when it first appeared. AdLib isn't even around anymore, although AdLib is mentioned as one of your music options in many new titles.

And yeah, we'll try to get a demo of DS9: The Hunt — if we can. We've heard that Paramount Interactive, the company behind DS9, has pretty much closed up shop. Will they be back? Will the game ever come out? We'll let you know as soon as we hear anything more.

Getting it Right the First Time

Dear PC Gamer,

My letter concerns the sad state of affairs that seems to be occurring at Sierra/Dynamix. When *Front Page Sports: Baseball* was released, people descended on software stores to get it, only to find that the `Sierra Switch' was once again upon us. Like *Outpost*, *Baseball* seems to be sadly unfinished, and there have been many cries of Foul! from the stands. To make matters worse, a message was recently posted on one of the Sierra AOL boards from a user who read on the internet that Dynamix didn't plan a patch in the near future. This is insulting to all the people who waited through the delays for a game that, given Dynamix's track record for producing top-quality sims with a minimum of bugs — not to mention Sierra's reputation for top-quality — is tantamount to a slap in the face. We consumers need to put the pressure on, so that half-finished software is not released — and if it is, patch it! SSI did it for *Tony LaRussa 2*; they even sent the patch disks to me in the mail!

I feel that Dynamix and Sierra are starting to fall from grace. If they are reading this, take heed. And please remember — we will support you as long as you support us.

Very sincerely,
Ted Fattel
Margate, FL

It's tough to argue with you, Ted. Truly buggy programs are a pain at best, and we get plenty of letters from readers who feel cheated when their new games won't work as they should. We would say, though, that a lot of the reports we get of "bugs" actually turn out to be cases where the user didn't configure their computer the way the game specified, or didn't understand IRQs and DMAs, or memory, or whatever. Obviously, such problems aren't bugs at all. But uninformed users still call 'em bugs, and often fill the on-line forums with indignant complaints.

Not that that's the case with FPS: Baseball — in fact, that game missed earning our Editors' Choice Award because of bugs. You're right to say that publishers have the responsibility to get patches out to users whenever a few bugs do slip through; and from what we've heard, Dynamix fully intends to issue patches for FPS:Baseball.

CD-ROM Q&A

Dear PC Gamer Staff:

A question: How many game demos are going to be on the CD-ROM version of the mag? Will the floppies and CDs have the same demos or different ones? Also, I think that you should also try to squeeze in some of the new hardware and software breakthroughs in each issue. You might also have a section of the mag devoted to modems: online services, BBS's, Internet, and games played via modem.

One additional request might be to set up a PC-Gamer BBS with an 800-number for fans alike to send in requests and gratitude. Will the Quarantine demo come on the disk as well as CD?

Soon-to-be Subscriber,

Ryan Grant
Marshall, TX

We'll always try to pack as much as we can on each CD-ROM. And since the floppy is so much smaller than the CD-ROM, it'll only contain one game demo, where the CD will contain many more — and they'll be bigger, too.

As for the BBS stuff, we'll look into it. It'd be a pretty neat thing to do, that's for sure! And finally, Quarantine was only on the CD.

PCG



Back Issues



Volume 1, Number 1 (May/June 1994)
"The Future is Here"
On the disk: *Theme Park*
In our first issue, we took a trip down to Austin for a close-up look at Origin's *Bioforge*, and Matt began his 12-step program by confessing his hidden addiction to *Doom*. Scoops! on *Noctropolis*, *System Shock*, *Front Page Sports: Baseball*, and

Volume 1, Number 2 (July 1994)
"Eat lead, Fritz!"
On the disk: *Pinball Fantasies* and *Sink or Swim*



We celebrated the 50th anniversary of D-Day with an extensive behind-the-scenes report on MicroProse's stunning WWII tank sim *Across the Rhine*, as well as reviews of *Tanks!*, *M-4 Sherman Tank Simulator*, and two pages of Tom McDonald's expert strategic tips on *V for Victory: Gold•Juno•Sword*. Looking to buy a multimedia upgrade kit? Our CD-ROM buyer's guide in this issue is just what you need!



Volume 1, Number 3 (August 1994)
"The Top 40 Games of All Time"
On the disk: *Detroit*
This is it — the list of the Top 40 games of all times that generated so much mail, so much controversy, so much outrage that we can hardly wait to do it again! Check out our story on Virtual Reality gaming and Forte Technology's incredible VFX-1 VR Helmet; pick up some killer tips for *Master of Orion*, *Quest for Glory I*, *Ultima VIII*, and *Mortal Kombat*; and read the best *Wing Commander III* story until *the* December 1994 issue came along!

Volume 1, Number 4 (September 1994)
"The Year of the PC"
On the disk: *CyClones*



Not everyone gets to go to the Consumer Electronics Show, but thanks to our stunning 18-page report you don't need to. We also detail what hardware you need to run these high-end juggernauts — and reveals that a great PC gaming system isn't as expensive as you might think. Great Scoops! on *NASCAR Racing*, *Wolf*, and *The Fortress of Dr. Radiaki*, plus two pages of *X-COM* strategy make this one a collector's item!



Volume 1, Number 5 (October 1994)
"Dark Forces"
On the disk: *Master of Magic*
Here's the definitive story on *Dark Forces*, a first-person shooter with a new Star Wars story, plus the first Scoop! on the biker adventure *Full Throttle*. And don't forget the review of *TIE Fighter*, which earned our highest rating ever! You want *real* previews? How about Scoops! on *Zephyr*, *Menzoberranzan*, *Dust*, and *Warcraft: Humans and Orcs*? Come on, order it — you know you wanna!

Volume 1, Number 6
"Cyberia"
On the disk: *Blackthorne*



We journeyed to Interplay's offices to preview the multimedia action-adventure *Cyberia*, and came back convinced that it has the potential to challenge *Rebel Assault* as one of the best-selling CD-ROM games ever. Strategy fans will love Bill Trotter's roundup of wargaming magazines, and once again we beat everyone to the punch with Scoops! on *King's Quest VII*, *Hell*, and *Dragon's Lore*, The Software Toolworks' groundbreaking FRP. Oh, and let's not forget the first of many bi-annual review indexes.



Volume 1, Number 7
"Wing Commander III"
On the disk: *Star Crusader*
On the CD-ROM: *Wing Commander III*, *Dawn Patrol*, *Relentless*, *Quarantine*, *Ultimate Football*, *Rise of the Robots*... and many, many more!
Say you're a Wing Commander fan? Then this is an issue you'll treasure forever! Bill Trotter went to Austin and took Chris Roberts' newest game for a test drive, and came back with a five-page feature. Tom McDonald assesses Spectrum Holobyte's plans for '95 and beyond, and explores the rapidly growing world of modem gaming. One of our best ever!

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Product Information Number 85

PC GAMER Presents SSI's The *Renegade: Battle for Jacob's Star* Contest!

SSI is busy putting the finishing touches on *Renegade: The Battle for Jacob's Star*, one of the most exciting space-combat games we've seen (those of you who bought the CD-ROM edition of the magazine will get to try it for yourselves). And to celebrate the release of *Renegade*, SSI is going to send two lucky *PC Gamer* readers (19 and over) on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure....



A Trip for Two to the U.S. Space Camp!

But Wait — What is the U.S. Space Camp?

The U.S. Space Camp was created by the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. Established in 1965 by the State of Alabama, empowered by the U.S. Congress, and supported by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the U.S. Space & Rocket Center is the nation's leading hands-on space science museum. Since 1982, the U.S. Space & Rocket Center has fostered national and international outreach programs through the U.S. SPACE CAMP, U.S SPACE ACADEMY, and AVIATION CHALLENGE programs and through creation of the U.S. SPACE CAMP Foundation. All these entities are non-profit, educational organizations.



Our Grand Prize winner (and a friend) will get hands-on experience with authentic astronaut training simulators. What a rush!

And What Will I Do at Space Camp?

You and a friend will be participating in the Adult Level I program, which will take you through the rigors of a 3-day course of astronaut and mission training, supplemented by various lectures. Shortly after arrival, you'll receive mission assignments and begin preparation for shuttle and space-station missions.

You'll get to try out astronaut training simulators in a unique, educational roleplaying scenario, and tours of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center and the U.S. Space and Rocket Center will round out the weekend.

And That's Not All — Check out These Other Great Prizes!

- **First Runner-up (one winner): A *Renegade* Flight Jacket (a $150.00 value!)**
- **Second Runner-up (three winners): An official *Renegade* Watch**
- **Third Runner-up: (five winners): A Gift Certificate for the SSI game of your choice.**

Sounds Great! What Do I Have To Do?

It's easy — but for a prize this good, we had to think of something tougher than just sending in a postcard!

During one of our semi-annual *PC Gamer* road trips, we spotted this sign and just had to whip out our official *PC Gamer* camera and preserve it for posterity. Now when we look back on this snapshot, we all get a good laugh — good enough to help us make it through the trials and tribulations of putting out the world's finest PC gaming mag.



In case you can't read the sign, it says, THURS PRIME RIB $9.95 WITH DIDDLY THE CLOWN

But now we need something new, something more, something even more fascinating than the thought of a clown named Diddly carving roast beef to get us through the tough times...

And That's Where You Come In!

To enter the *Renegade: Battle for Jacob's Star* contest, just send us the most interesting snapshot you've got. We'll pick the one we like the best, and voila! — it's off to the U.S. Space Camp.(Oh, if you've got only one copy of your fave pic, you can photocopy it, or scan it and send it in on a 3.5" disk.) Mail it to:

PC Gamer
Battle for Jacob's Star Contest
P.O. Box 29364
Greensboro, NC 27429

ONE ENTRY PER PERSON! All entries must be received no later than February 1, 1995.

No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited. One entry per person. For a complete set of rules, write your name, address, age (YOU MUST BE 19 OR OLDER TO WIN THE GRAND PRIZE), and telephone number on a 3x5" card and mail to: *PC Gamer* Battle for Jacob's Star Contest, P.O. Box 29364, Greensboro, N.C. 27429. Entries must be received by February 1, 1995. The editors' decision is final.

Next Time in PC Gamer...

Issue 2.2 Goes On Sale Jan. 10 Don't Miss It!

We'd hoped to do a special tribute to romance for our February issue, but at the last minute we decided that this stuff would be even more touching....

Multimedia Games: When They Work, and When They Don't

The technology being put to work in today's computer games is sometimes amazing, with all the 3D modeling, voice acting, and digitized video you could ask for. But is *gameplay* suffering at the expense of all the impressive extras? We'll take a close-up view of the whole issue, and tell you which titles have made multimedia work — and which have failed miserably.



We've been seeing famous faces and full-motion video for some time now — but are the games any better for it?

Sportsman's Paradise

Our sims columnist, Lee Buchanan, is a *big* fan of just about every sporting event around (he's still complaining about the lack of a decent jai alai sim). So we gave him a dream job, at our readers' request: Put together the *definitive* guide to the best sports sims around. We'll see if he made the cut next issue.

The First Annual PC Gamer Readers' Choice Awards

No, we *won't* actually be running the Readers' Choice Awards next issue. But we want you to know that it's time to start sending us your selections. We're looking for your choices for Game of the Year, Best Simulation, Best Adventure, Best RPG, Best Sports Game, Best War Game, Best Strategy Game, Best Arcade-Action, and Best Puzzle Game. We also want to hear your nominees for Special Achievement in Sound, Music, Graphics, Animation, Design Excellence, and Innovative Design. Got all that? Good! Then start sending your picks to:

Readers' Choice
PC Gamer
300-A S. Westgate Drive
Greensboro, NC 27407

And of Course...
We'll have plenty of new reviews, including Electronic Arts' *Noctropolis*, *Magic Carpet*, and *Navy Fighters*; Virgin's *Creature Shock*; Capstone's *Operation Body Count*; and maybe even NovaLogic's long-anticipated *Armored Fist*!

Plus we'll bring you more Scoops!, more Eyewitness, and another session with all those friendly *PC Gamer* columnists. And don't forget those CD-ROM and floppy cover disks!

All this and more, coming at you in the February issue of PC Gamer!

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EDITORS, Matthew A. Firme and Stephen Poole
ART DIRECTOR, Edwin C. Malstrom
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR, Scotty Billings
PRODUCTION EDITOR, Shelli Craig
DISK EDITOR, Gary Meredith
ASSISTANT DISK EDITOR, Joseph Novicki
ASSOCIATE EDITOR, Todd Vaughn

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:
Heidi Aycock, Dan Bennett, Lee Buchanan, T. Liam McDonald, Neil Randall, William R. Trotter, Neil West, Scott Wolf

GP PUBLICATIONS, INC.
EDITORIAL, ART, PRODUCTION, MARKETING
300-A S. Westgate Drive
Greensboro, NC 27407
Phone: (910) 852-6711
Fax: (910) 632-1165

EXECUTIVE EDITOR, Selby Bateman
SENIOR ART & DESIGN DIRECTOR, Amy L. Pruette
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR, Irma Swain
MARKETING MANAGER, Kathleen Ingram
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR, Judy Earley

NATIONAL ADVERTISING SALES OFFICE,
SALES AND CIRCULATION, MANAGEMENT
1350 Old Bayshore Highway
Suite 210 Burlingame, CA 94010
Phone: (415)-696-1688
Fax: (415)-696-1678

PUBLISHER,
Gini Talmadge

REGIONAL ADVERTISING MANAGERS,
Caroline Simpson-Bint
Rick Vandervoorn

DIRECTOR OF CIRCULATION, Maryanne Napoli

Please send all advertising materials to Judy Earley, Production Coordinator, *PC Gamer*, 300-A S. Westgate Drive, Greensboro, NC 27407

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PRESIDENT,
Chris Anderson

VP/FINANCE & CFO,
Tom Valentino

Chip Elko was glad to be home. Lt. Render would have been glad too, if dead men could feel anything. But he and the rest of the crew had long since made their fleeting contribution to the Mediterranean's food chain. A few weeks after being rescued by Maltese fisherman, he was back in the States, back on a grimy, deserted street in Passaic, New Jersey.

"Gotta light, buddy?"

Elko swivelled around to see a stooped, dark figure hovering practically under his right elbow, holding a crooked Lucky Strike just out from under the brim of a greasy fedora. Absentmindedly, he fumbled in his pocket for the battered old Zippo, the only thing to survive from his recent ordeal.

"Here," he said, thumbing the wheel on the lighter a couple of times before the wick caught. Holding the flame close to the stranger's face, he could just make out a visage of creases and cracks, more the texture of sun-dried mud than skin.

"Thanks," the gnome coughed, "you just get into town?"

"Yeah," Elko answered noncommittally, wishing he was upwind of the fellow.

"Some friends of mine, they need a job done...ya look like you could use some cash. Here's all you need to know," he rasped, pushing a small wooden box into Elko's hand before slipping into the alley he'd come from.

"Hey!" Chip yelled, too late. Realizing the box was still in his hand, he slowly raised the lid, revealing a small yellowed piece of paper, some crumpled C-notes, and a twisted silver cross...

CONTINUED NEXT MONTH!

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